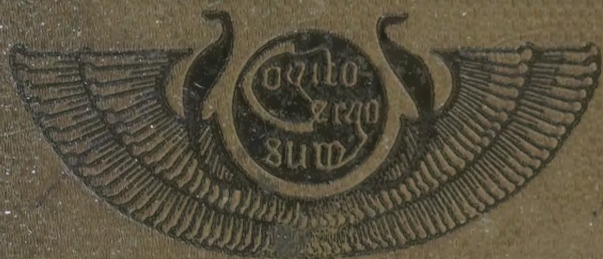


ENGLISH SONNETS



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THE
GOLDEN
BOOK
OF
ENGLISH
SONNETS

SELECTED BY

WILLIAM
ROBERTSON



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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION

A FRESH edition of the late Mr. Robertson's sonnet anthology being now required, I have been asked by the publishers to write a short preface, and to suggest any alterations or additions that may appear to be desirable. The compiler, however, would seem to have done his work so admirably that it would manifestly be doing injustice to his selection if any extensive alterations were made therein, and I have therefore restricted myself to suggesting that the following eight sonnets should be added: (1) Wordsworth's "To Toussaint L'Ouverture"; (2) Shelley's "Ye hasten to the dead! What seek ye there"; (3) Lord Hanmer's "The Old Fisher" and (4) "The Pine Woods"; (5) Aubrey de Vere's "Sorrow"; (6) W. B. Scott's "The Universe Void"; (7) Wilfrid Scawen Blunt's "The Sublime"; and (8) Rupert Brooke's "The Soldier."

The first of these is universally admitted to be one of Wordsworth's finest sonnets, and the second by Shelley is little, if at all, inferior to it. The two by Lord Hanmer were greatly admired by my late friend and colleague Austin Dobson, and more especially the graphic description of "The Old Fisher," which is almost unique in its vivid simplicity. Mr. Blunt's sonnet "The Sublime" has been described as "sonorous



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and majestic," and it has for some time been regarded as not unworthy to be classed with such famous sonnets as Milton's "Massacre in Piedmont," Shelley's "Ozymandias," and Wordsworth's "On Westminster Bridge." "The Soldier," by Rupert Brooke, although written so recently, has already become a general favourite, and has been so often quoted and referred to that no representative collection of English sonnets could now be considered satisfactory or complete which did not include it.

It will be noted that the late Mr. Robertson's original preface is reprinted exactly as it appeared in the first edition; and that no alterations have been made in the text beyond the slight additions above mentioned.

Acknowledgment is due to the author and to Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., for permission to print the double sonnet "The Sublime" from the *Poetical Works* of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1914); also to Messrs. Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd., and the John Lane Company, New York, for permission to include "The Soldier" from *1914 and Other Poems*, by Rupert Brooke.

It is to be hoped that this second edition of Mr. Robertson's anthology may prove as successful as the first, and that the volume may eventually become the permanent standard collection of English sonnets.

SAMUEL WADDINGTON

50 BRONDESURY VILLAS

N.W. 6

January 1, 1922

THE PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IT lies wholly outside the scope of a popular collection such as this to provide an essay on the history, structure, and development of the Sonnet. In like manner, literary annotations, whether biographical or critical, have been excluded. My commission was simply to make an anthology of some 230 sonnets from the whole range of English literature, giving, however, a friendly preference to the work of recent and living authors. At the last moment, the number of sonnets was slightly increased, enabling me to make the representation of our greater poets, such as Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Rossetti, more adequate, and thus securing a better balance for the collection.

Were any apology needed for the appearance of such a volume, it would be found in the fact that sonnet-books are at present very scarce and difficult to procure, those of Leigh Hunt, Dennis, Main, Mr. Waddington, Mr. Hall Caine, and Mr. S. Wellwood being all out of print. Sharp's ever popular *Sonnets of the Nineteenth Century* is still in circulation, but it necessarily covers only a limited part of the field, and supplies the reader with no examples of our early sonnet-literature, or of that which has been appearing



of late. On the other hand, Sir A. Quiller-Couch's *English Sonnets* (1897) and Mr. Bowyer Nichols' *Little Book of English Sonnets* (1903) stop short, the one with Mrs. Browning, the other with Keats and Hood.

In these circumstances, it is hoped that the present volume, containing, as it does, about 140 copyright sonnets in addition to the best of an earlier age, may obtain something more than a passing glance from genuine lovers of poetry. Whatever its faults, it can at least lay claim to the merit of making readily accessible to general readers a large number of beautiful poems in a form of verse which has ever been chief favourite with our great masters for the expression of their most intimate and elevated thoughts.

To all who have favoured me with their kind permission to reprint copyright sonnets, I desire to express here my most grateful thanks: namely, to—The Hon. Maurice Baring; the Dean of Norwich (H. C. Beeching); Mr. A. C. Benson (and his publisher, Mr. John Lane); Mr. Laurence Binyon; Mr. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt; Mr. Robert Bridges (and his publishers, Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.); Mr. W. L. Courtney; Lord Alfred Douglas; Mr. Edmund Gosse; Mr. Maurice Hewlett; Mr. Edmond Holmes; Mr. Ernest Myers; Mr. John Payne; Canon Rawnsley; Mr. Samuel Waddington; Dr. T. Herbert Warren (President of Magdalen College, Oxford); Mr. William Watson; Mr. A. St. John Adcock, for "Outside

the Church" (*From a London Garden*: David Nutt, 1903); Mr. Henry Newbolt, for "Devon" (*Poems New and Old*: John Murray, 1912); also to Mr. Bertram Dobell, for a sonnet by himself and one by James Thomson (B.V.); Mr. Coulson Kernahan, for a sonnet by himself and four by Philip Bourke Marston; Mr. W. M. Rossetti, for his own "Democracy Downtrodden" and for "A Sonnet is a moment's monument" by D. G. Rossetti; Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, for his own sonnets and those of A. C. Swinburne: also to Mme Duclaux (A. Mary F. Robinson); the Hon. Mrs. Felkin (Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler); Mrs. Alice Meynell; Mrs. Woods (and her publishers, Messrs. Macmillan & Co.): also to Mrs. Dowden, for sonnets by the late Professor Dowden; Miss Harriett Jay, for a sonnet by Robert Buchanan; Mrs. Lee-Hamilton, for sonnets by Eugene Lee-Hamilton; Lady Leighton-Warren, for sonnets by Lord de Tabley; Mrs. Eveleen Myers, for sonnets by Frederic W. H. Myers; Mrs. Romanes, for a sonnet by George J. Romanes: also to Mr. Bennett-Goldney, for a sonnet by Sebastian Evans; Mr. Horatio Brown, for sonnets by J. A. Symonds; The Marquess of Crewe, for "The Téméraire" by Lord Houghton (Mr. John Murray consenting); Mr. Edward Garnett, for sonnets by Richard Garnett; Mr. W. D. Main, for a sonnet by David M. Main, editor of the admirable *Treasury of English Sonnets*, 1880; Mr. Wilfrid Meynell, for



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sonnets by Francis Thompson ; Mr. Marriott Watson, for sonnets by Rosamund Marriott Watson : also to Messrs. George Bell & Sons, for a sonnet by Thomas Ashe ; to Messrs. Burns & Oates, for a sonnet by Aubrey de Vere ; to Mr. Ellis, for the sonnets of D. G. Rossetti ; to Mr. John Lane, for sonnets by E. C. Lefroy ; to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., for a sonnet by Jean Ingelow (*Collected Poems*, 1879), and for two by Andrew Lang (*Bullades in Blue China*, 1880-81) ; to Messrs. Macmillan & Co., for sonnets by Christina Rossetti, Frances Anne Kemble, and Charles Tennyson-Turner ; to Mr. John Murray, for two sonnets by Julian Fane ; to Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., for a sonnet by Mr. Austin Dobson ; and to Mr. T. Fisher Unwin for sonnets by Mathilde Blind.

My wish to do honour to the work of Mr. Richard Le Gallienne will, I trust, be accepted as sufficient apology for printing his early sonnet, "Gentle Night," without awaiting his formal permission.

Finally, I desire to thank all who have helped me with good wishes and valuable suggestions—in particular, Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, Mr. Samuel Waddington, Mr. Coulson Kernahan, Mr. Bertram Dobell and Dr. George Galloway.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON

July 31, 1913

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My galley, chargèd with forgetfulness,	1
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*A Sonnet is a moment's monument,—
Memorial from the Soul's eternity
To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,
Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,
Of its own arduous fulness reverent :
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule ; and let Time see
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.*

*A Sonnet is a coin : its face reveals
The soul,—its converse, to what Power 'tis due :—
Whether for tribute to the august appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
It serve ; or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.*

D. G. ROSSETTI



SIR THOMAS WYATT

THE LOVER COMPARETH HIS STATE TO
A SHIP IN PERILOUS STORM TOSSED
ON THE SEA

My galley, chargèd with forgetfulness,
Through sharpè seas in winter nights doth pass
'Tween rock and rock ; and eke my foe, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelty :
And every hour, a thought in readiness,
As though that death were light in such a case.
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forcèd sighs and trusty fearfulness.
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain,
Have done the wearied cords great hinderance ;
Wreathèd with error and with ignorance,
The stars be hid that lead me to this pain ;
Drowned is reason that should be my comfort,
And I remain, despairing of the port.





HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY
DESCRIPTION OF SPRING, WHEREIN EACH
THING RENEWS, SAVE ONLY THE LOVER

THE soote season, that bud and bloom furth brings,
 With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale ;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings ;
 The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray now springs,
 The hart hath hung his old head on the pale ;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings ;
 The fishes flete with new repaired scale ;
The adder all her slough away she slings ;
 The swift swallow pursueth the fließ smale ;
The busy bee her honey now she mings ;
 Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.





SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

WITH how sad steps, O Moon, thou climbst the skies !

How silently, and with how wan a face !

What ! may it be that even in heavenly place

That busy archer his sharp arrows tries ?

Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes

Can judge of love, thou feelst a lover's case ;

I read it in thy looks ; thy languisht grace

To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.

Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,—

Is constant love deemed there but want of wit ?

Are beauties there as proud as here they be ?

Do they above love to be loved, and yet

Those lovers scorn, whom that love doth possess ?

Do they call virtue there ungratefulness ?





SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

COME, Sleep, O Sleep ! the certain knot of peace,
The baiting place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low ;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw :
O make in me those civil wars to cease ;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland, and a weary head :
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.





SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

HAVING this day my horse, my hand, my lance
 Guided so well, that I obtained the prize,
 Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy, France ;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance ;
 Townfolks my strength ; a daintier judge applies
 His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise,
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance :
Others, because of both sides I do take
 My blood from them who did excel in this
Think Nature me a man-at-arms did make.
 How far they shot awry ! the true cause is,—
Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.





SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

LEAVE me, O Love, which reachest but to dust ;
 And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things ;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust ;
 Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
 To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light,
 That doth both shine and give us light to see.
O take fast hold ; let that light be thy guide
 In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide
 Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world ; thy uttermost I see :
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.



EDMUND SPENSER

Most glorious Lord of life! that on this day
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin;
And, having harrowed hell, didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win :
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin ;
And grant that we, for whom Thou diddest die,
Being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin,
May live for ever in felicity ;
And that thy love we weighing worthily
May likewise love Thee for the same again ;
And for thy sake, that all like dear didst buy,
With love may one another entertain.
So let us love, dear love, like as we ought :
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.





EDMUND SPENSER

I JOY to see how, in your drawn work,
Yourself unto the Bee ye do compare;
And me unto the Spider, that doth lurk
In close await, to catch her unaware:
Right so yourself were caught in cunning snare
Of a dear foe, and thrallèd to his love,
In whose strait bands ye now captivèd are
So firmly, that ye never may remove.
But, as your work is woven all about
With woodbine flow'rs and fragrant eglantine,
So sweet your prison you in time shall prove,
With many dear delights bedeckèd fine.
And all thenceforth eternal peace shall see
Between the Spider and the gentle Bee.





EDMUND SPENSER

ONE day I wrote her name upon the strand ;
 But came the waves, and washèd it away :
Again I wrote it with a second hand ;
 But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.
Vain man, said she, that dost in vain assay
 A mortal thing so to immortalise ;
For I myself shall like to this decay,
 And eke my name be wipèd out likewise.
Not so, quod I ; let baser things devise
 To die in dust, but you shall live by fame :
My verse your virtues rare shall eternise,
 And in the heavens write your glorious name,—
Where, whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.





EDMUND SPENSER

LIKE as the culver on the barèd bough

Sits mourning for the absence of her mate ;

And in her song sends many a wishful vow

For his return, that seems to linger late ;

So I alone, now left disconsolate,

Mourn to myself the absence of my love,

And wand'ring here and there all desolate

Seek with my plaints to match that mournful dove.

Ne joy of aught that under heaven doth hove

Can comfort me, but her own joyous sight,

Whose sweet aspect both God and man can move

In her unspotted pleasance to delight.

Dark is my day whiles her fair light I miss,

And dead my life that wants such lively bliss.





WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

SHALL I compare thee to a summer's day ?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate :
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date ;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed ;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed ;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest ;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest ;
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.





WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WHEN to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste :
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight :
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.





WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

LIKE as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end ;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow :
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.





WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THAT time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

 This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more
 strong,

 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.





WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THEN hate me when thou wilt ; if ever, now ;
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss :
Ah, do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquered woe ;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purposed overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite,
But in the onset come ; so shall I taste
At first the very worst of fortune's might ;
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.





WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year !
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen !
What old December's bareness everywhere !
And yet this time removed was summer's time ;
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
Like widowed wombs after their lords' decease :
Yet this abundant issue seemed to me
But hope of orphans and unfathered fruit ;
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute ;
 Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
 That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.





WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

FROM you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim-
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.
Yet not the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew :
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose ;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you,—you pattern of all those.
Yet seemed it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.





WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THINE eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain,
Have put on black and loving mourners be,
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
And truly not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face :
O, let it then as well beseem thy heart
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
And suit thy pity like in every part.
Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.





WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WHEN in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring ;
And, for they looked but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing :
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.





WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

LET me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove :
O no ! it is an ever fixèd mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken :
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come ;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.





SIR WALTER RALEIGH
ON SPENSER'S *FAERY QUEEN*

METHOUGHT I saw the grave where Laura lay,
Within that Temple where the vestal flame
Was wont to burn ; and passing by that way
To see that buried dust of living fame,
Whose tomb fair Love and fairer Virtue kept,
All suddenly I saw the Faery Queen :
At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept ;
And from thenceforth those Graces were not seen,
For they this Queen attended ; in whose stead
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse.
Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,
And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce,
Where Homer's spright did tremble all for grief,
And cursed the access of that celestial thief.





BARTHOLOMEW GRIFFIN

FAIR is my love that feeds among the lilies,
The lilies growing in that pleasant garden
Where Cupid's Mount, that well-belovèd hill is,
And where that little god himself is Warden.
See where my love sits in the beds of spices,
Beset all round with camphor, myrrh, and roses,
And interlaced with curious devices,
Which her from all the world apart incloses.
There doth she tune her lute for her delight,
And with sweet music makes the ground to move;
Whilst I, poor I, do sit in heavy plight,
Wailing alone my unrespected love,
Not daring rush into so rare a place,
That gives to her, and she to it, a grace.





THOMAS LODGE

O SHADY vales, O fair enrichèd meads,
O sacred woods, sweet fields, and rising mountains !
O painted flowers, green herbs where Flora treads,
Refreshed by wanton winds and wat'ry fountains !
O all you wingèd choristers of wood,
That perched aloft your former pains report,
And straight again recount with pleasant mood
Your present joys in sweet and seemly sort !
O all you creatures, whosoever thrive
On mother earth, in seas, by air, by fire !—
More blest are you than I here under sun :
Love dies in me, whenas he doth revive
In you : I perish under beauty's ire,
Where after storms, winds, frosts, your life is won.





ROBERT GREENE

AH! were she pitiful as she is fair,
Or but as mild as she is seeming so,
Then were my hopes greater than my despair,
Then all the world were heaven, nothing woe.
Ah! were her heart relenting as her hand,
That seems to melt even with the mildest touch,
Then knew I where to seat me in a land
Under wide heavens, but yet there is none such.
So as she shows she seems the budding rose,
Yet sweeter far than is an earthly flower ;
Sovran of beauty, like the spray she grows ;
Compassed she is with thorns and cankered bower.
Yet were she willing to be plucked and worn,
She would be gathered, though she grew on thorn.





FRANCIS BACON, LORD VERULAM

SEATED between the old world and the new,
A land there is no other land may touch,
Where reigns a Queen in peace and honour true ;
Stories or fables do describe no such.
Never did Atlas such a burden bear,
As she, in holding up the world opprest ;
Supplying with her virtue everywhere
Weakness of friends, errors of servants best,
No nation breeds a warmer blood for war ;
And yet she calms them by her majesty ;
No age hath ever wits refined so far,
And yet she calms them by her policy :
To her thy son must make his sacrifice
If he will have the morning of his eyes.





HENRY CONSTABLE

My lady's presence makes the roses red,
Because to see her lips they blush for shame :
The lily's leaves for envy pale became,
For her white hands in them this envy bred.
The marigold abroad its leaves doth spread,
Because the sun's and her power is the same ;
The violet of purple colour came,
Dyed with the blood she made my heart to shed.
In brief, all flowers from her their virtue take ;
From her sweet breath their sweet smells do proceed ;
The living heat, which her eye-beams do make,
Warmeth the ground, and quickeneth the seed.
The rain, wherewith she watereth these flowers,
Falls from mine eyes, which she dissolves in
showers.



SAMUEL DANIEL

CARE-CHARMER Sleep, son of the sable Night,
 Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
 Relieve my languish, and restore the light ;
 With dark forgetting of my care return ;
And let the day be time enough to mourn
 The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth :
 Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
 Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires,
 To model forth the passions of the morrow ;
 Never let rising sun approve you liars,
 To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
 And never wake to feel the day's disdain.





SAMUEL DANIEL

LET others sing of Knights and Paladines,
In aged accents and untimely words,
Paint shadows in imaginary lines,
Which well the reach of their high wit records.
But I must sing of thee, and those fair eyes
Authentic shall my verse in time to come,
When yet th' unborn shall say, Lo, where she lies !
Whose beauty made him speak, that else was dumb
These are the arcs, the trophies I erect,
That fortify thy name against old age ;
And these thy sacred virtues must protect
Against the Dark and Time's consuming rage.
Though th' error of my youth in them appear,
Suffice, they show I lived, and loved thee dear.





MICHAEL DRAYTON

SINCE there's no help, come, let us kiss and part.

Nay, I have done, you get no more of me ;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.

Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,

And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows

That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,

When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,

And Innocence is closing up his eyes,—
Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.





JOSHUA SYLVESTER

THEY say that shadows of deceased ghosts
Do haunt the houses and the graves about,
Of such whose lives-lamp went untimely out,
Delighting still in their forsaken hosts :
So, in the place where cruel Love did shoot
The fatal shaft that slew my love's delight,
I stalk and walk and wander day and night,
Even like a ghost with unperceivèd foot.
But those light ghosts are happier far than I,
For at their pleasure they can come and go
Unto the place that hides their treasure, so,
And see the same with their fantastic eye ;
Where I, alas, dare not approach the cruel
Proud monument that doth inclose my jewel.





JOSHUA SYLVESTER (?)

WERE I as base as is the lowly plain,
And you, my Love, as high as heaven above,
Yet should the thoughts of me, your humble swain,
Ascend to heaven in honour of my Love.

WERE I as high as heaven above the plain,
And you, my Love, as humble and as low
As are the deepest bottoms of the main,
Wheresoe'er you were, with you my love should go.

WERE you the earth, dear Love, and I the skies,
My love should shine on you like to the sun,
And look upon you with ten thousand eyes,
Till heaven waxed blind and till the world were
done.

Wheresoe'er I am, below, or else above you,
Wheresoe'er you are, my heart shall truly love you.





WILLIAM ALABASTER

INCARNATIO EST MAXIMUM DEI DONUM

LIKE as the fountain of all light created
Doth pour out streams of brightness undefined
Through all the conduits of transparent kind,
That heaven and air are both illuminated,
And yet his light is not thereby abated ;
So God's eternal bounty ever shined
The beams of being, moving, life, sense, mind,
And to all things himself communicated
But for the violent diffusive pleasure
Of goodness, that left not till God had spent
Himself, by giving us himself his treasure
In making man a God omnipotent.
How might this goodness draw ourselves above
Which drew down God with such attractive love !





THOMAS CAMPION

THRICE toss these oaken ashes in the air,
And thrice three times tie up this true-love's knot ;
Thrice sit you down in this enchanted chair,
And murmur soft, ' She will, or she will not.'
Go, burn those poisoned weeds in that blue fire,
This cypress gathered out a dead man's grave,
These screech-owls' feathers and this prickling briar,
That all thy thorny cares an end may have.
Then come, you fairies, dance with me a round :
Dance in a circle, let my Love be centre !
Melodiously breathe an enchanted sound :
Melt her hard heart, that some remorse may enter !
In vain are all the charms I can devise :
She hath an art to break them with her eyes.





BARNABE BARNES

AH, sweet Content, where is thy mild abode?

Is it with shepherds and light-hearted swains,
Which sing upon the downs and pipe abroad,
Tending their flocks and cattle on the plains?

Ah, sweet Content, where dost thou safely rest?

In heaven, with angels which the praises sing
Of him that made and rules at his behest
The minds and hearts of every living thing?

Ah, sweet Content, where doth thine harbour hold?

Is it in churches, with religious men
Which please the gods with prayers manifold,
And in their studies meditate it then?—

Whether thou dost in heaven or earth appear,

Be where thou wilt, thou wilt not harbour here.





JOHN DONNE,
DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

DEATH, be not proud, though some have callèd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so ;
For those, whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor Death ; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure ; then from thee much more must
flow ;
And soonest our best men with thee do go—
Rest of their bones, and souls' delivery.
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell ;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then ?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally ;
And death shall be no more : Death, thou shalt die.





JOHN DONNE,
DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

At the round earth's imagined corners blow
 Your trumpets, angels ; and arise, arise
 From death, you numberless infinities
Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go,
All whom the flood did, and fire shall, o'erthrow ;
 All whom death, war, age, agues, tyrannies,
 Despair, law, chance hath slain ; and you, whose
 eyes
Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space ;
 For if above all those my sins abound,
'Tis late to ask abundance of thy grace,
 When we are there. Here on this lowly ground
'Teach me how to repent ; for that's as good
As if thou'dst sealed my pardon with thy blood.





GEORGE HERBERT

LORD, with what care hast Thou begirt us round !
Parents first season us ; then schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws ; they send us bound
To rules of reason, holy messengers,
Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging sin,
Affliction sorted, anguish of all sizes,
Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in,
Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,
Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,
The sound of glory ringing in our ears ;
Without, our shame ; within, our consciences ;
Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears.
Yet all these fences and their whole array
One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.





WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF
HAWTHORNDEN

I know that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is brought,
In 'Time's great periods shall return to nought ;
That fairest states have fatal nights and days ;
I know how all the Muse's heavenly lays,
With toil of spright which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds, of few or none are sought,
And that nought lighter is than airy praise ;
I know frail beauty like the purple flower,
To which one morn both birth and death affords ;
That love a jarring is of mind's accords,
Where sense and will invassal reason's power :
 Know what I list, this all can not me move,
 But that, O me ! I both must write and love.





WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN

ALEXIS, here she stayed ; among these pines,
Sweet hermitress, she did alone repair ;
Here did she spread the treasure of her hair,
More rich than that brought from the Colchian mines.
She set her by these muskèd eglantines,
The happy place the print seems yet to bear ;
Her voice did sweeten here thy sugared lines,
To which winds, trees, beasts, birds, did lend their ear.
Me here she first perceived, and here a morn
Of bright carnations did o'erspread her face ;
Here did she sigh, here first my hopes were born,
And I first got a pledge of promised grace :
But ah ! what served it to be happy so,
Sith passèd pleasures double but new woe ?





WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN

How many times night's silent queen her face
Hath hid, how oft with stars in silver mask
In Heaven's great hall she hath begun her task,
And cheered the waking eye in lower place!
How oft the sun hath made by Heaven's swift race
The happy lover to forsake the breast
Of his dear lady, wishing in the west
His golden coach to run had larger space!
I ever count and number, since, alas!
I bade farewell to my heart's dearest guest,
The miles I compass; and in mind I chase
The floods and mountains hold me from my rest:
But, woe is me! long count and count may I,
Ere I see her whose absence makes me die.





WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN

DEAR quirister, who from those shadows sends,
Ere that the blushing dawn dare shew her light,
Such sad lamenting strains, that night attends
(Become all ear), stars stay to hear thy plight ;
If one whose grief even reach of thought transcends,
Who ne'er (not in a dream) did taste delight,
May thee importune who like case pretends,
And seems to joy in woe, in woe's despite ;
Tell me (so may thou fortune milder try,
And long, long sing) for what thou thus complains,
Sith, winter gone, the sun in dappled sky
Now smiles on meadows, mountains, woods, and plains ?
The bird, as if my question did her move,
With trembling wings sobbed forth, I love, I love !





WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF
HAWTHORNDEN

NO TRUST IN TIME

Look how the flower which lingeringly doth fade,
The morning's darling late, the summer's queen,
Spoiled of that juice which kept it fresh and green,
As high as it did raise, bows low the head :
Right so my life, contentments being dead,
Or in their contraries but only seen,
With swifter speed declines than erst it spread,
And blasted, scarce now shews what it hath been.
As doth the pilgrim therefore, whom the night
By darkness would imprison on his way,
Think on thy home, my soul, and think aright
Of what yet rests thee of life's wasting day :
 Thy sun posts westward, passèd is thy morn,
 And twice it is not given thee to be born.





WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN

THE BOOK OF THE WORLD

OF this fair volume which we World do name
If we the sheets and leaves could turn with care,
Of him who it corrects and did it frame,
We clear might read the art and wisdom rare :
Find out his power which wildest powers doth tame,
His providence extending everywhere,
His justice which proud rebels doth not spare,
In every page, no, period of the same.
But silly we, like foolish children, rest
Well pleased with coloured vellum, leaves of gold,
Fair dangling ribands, leaving what is best,
On the great writer's sense ne'er taking hold ;
Or if by chance our minds do muse on ought,
It is some picture on the margin wrought.





WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF
HAWTHORNDEN

FOR THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD :
THE ANGELS

Run, shepherds, run where Bethlem blest appears,
We bring the best of news, be not dismayed,
A Saviour there is born, more old than years,
Amidst heaven's rolling heights this earth who stayed
In a poor cottage inned, a virgin maid
A weakling did him bear, who all upbears ;
There is he poorly swaddled, in manger laid,
To whom too narrow swaddlings are our spheres :
Run, shepherds, run, and solemnize his birth,
This is that night—no, day, grown great with bliss,
In which the power of Satan broken is ;
In heaven be glory, peace unto the earth !
 Thus singing, through the air the angels swam,
 And cope of stars re-echoèd the same.





WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN

FOR THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD :
THE SHEPHERDS

O THAN the fairest day thrice fairer night !
Night to best days in which a sun doth rise,
Of which that golden eye, which clears the skies,
Is but a sparkling ray, a shadow light :
And blessed ye, in silly-pastors' sight,
Mild creatures, in whose warm crib now lies
That heaven-sent youngling, holy-maid-born wight,
'Midst, end, beginning of our prophecies :
Blest cottage that hath flowers in winter spread ;
Though withered, blessed grass, that hath the grace
To deck and be a carpet to that place.
Thus sang, unto the sounds of oaten reed,
 Before the babe, the shepherds bowed on knees,
 And springs ran nectar, honey dropt from trees.





JOHN MILTON
TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O NIGHTINGALE, that on yon bloomy spray
 Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
 Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May ;
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
 First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
 Portend success in love ; O, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
 Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh ;
 As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why :
 Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.





JOHN MILTON

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year !
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near ;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.





JOHN MILTON
ON HIS BLINDNESS

WHEN I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent, which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,—
‘Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?’
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, ‘God doth not need
Either man’s works or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly : thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o’er land and ocean without rest ;
They also serve who only stand and wait.’





JOHN MILTON
TO MR. LAWRENCE

LAWRENCE, of virtuous father virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won
From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.





JOHN MILTON

TO CYRIACK SKINNER

CYRIACK, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot ;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask ?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain
mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.





JOHN MILTON

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

AVENGE, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not : in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant ; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.





WILLIAM COWPER

TO MRS. UNWIN

MARY! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from Heaven as some have feigned they
drew,
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
And undebased by praise of meaner things ;
That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth with honour due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings.
But thou hast little need. There is a Book
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright ;—
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine ;
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.





THOMAS RUSSELL
AT LEMNOS

ON this lone isle, whose rugged rocks affright
The cautious pilot, ten revolving years
Great Pæan's son, unwonted erst to tears,
Wept o'er his wound : alike each rolling light
Of heaven he watched, and blamed its lingering flight ;
By day the sea-mew, screaming round his cave,
Drove slumber from his eyes ; the chiding wave
And savage howlings chased his dreams by night.
Hope still was his : in each low breeze that sighed
Through his rude grot he heard a coming oar ;
In each white cloud a coming sail he spied ;
Nor seldom listened to the fancied roar
Of Æta's torrents, or the hoarser tide
That parts famed Trachis from the Euboic shore.





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

SCORN not the Sonnet ! Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours : with this key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart ; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound ;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound ;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief ;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow ; a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways ; and when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet,—whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few !





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still !





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
'To think that now our Life is only drest
For show,—mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone: our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour :
England hath need of thee : she is a fen
Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;
Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart ;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea :
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

THE world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous east in fee ;
And was the safeguard of the west : the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free ;
No guile seduced, no force could violate ;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay ;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day :
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great is passed away.





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL,
CAMBRIDGE

TAX not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence !
Give all thou canst ; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more ;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die ;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

THE WILD DUCK'S NEST

THE imperial Consort of the Fairy-king
Owns not a sylvan bower ; or gorgeous cell
With emerald floored, and with purpureal shell
Ceilinged and roofed ; that is so fair a thing
As this low structure, for the tasks of Spring
Prepared by one who loves the buoyant swell
Of the brisk waves, yet here consents to dwell ;
And spreads in steadfast peace her brooding wing.
Words cannot paint the o'ershadowing yew-tree bough,
And dimly-gleaming Nest,—a hollow crown
Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
Fine as the mother's softest plumes allow :
I gazed—and, self-accused while gazing, sighed
For human-kind, weak slaves of cumbrous pride !





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

‘ WITH how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb’st the sky,
How silently, and with how wan a face ! ’
Where art thou ? Thou so often seen on high,
Running among the clouds a Wood-nymph’s race !
Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath’s a sigh
Which they would stifle, move at such a pace !
The northern Wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle-horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, Goddess ! this should be :
And all the stars, fast as the clouds were riven,
Should sally forth, to keep thee company,
Hurrying and sparkling through the clear blue heaven ;
But, Cynthia ! should to thee the palm be given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
TO THE RIVER DUDDON

I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away.—Vain sympathies !
For backward, Duddon, as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide ;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide ;
The Form remains, the Function never dies ;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish ;—be it so !
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour ;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent
dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.





WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den ;—
O miserable Chieftain ! where and when
Wilt thou find patience ? Yet die not ; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow :
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee ; air, earth, and skies ;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee ; thou hast great allies ;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.





ROBERT SOUTHEY

WINTER

A WRINKLED crabbèd man they picture thee,
Old Winter, with a rugged beard as grey
As the long moss upon the apple-tree ;
Blue-lipt, an ice-drop at thy sharp blue nose,
Close muffled up, and on thy dreary way
Plodding alone through sleet and drifting snows.
They should have drawn thee by the high-heapt hearth,
Old Winter, seated in thy great armed chair,
Watching the children at their Christmas mirth ;
Or circled by them as thy lips declare
Some merry jest, or tale of murder dire,
Or troubled spirit that disturbs the night,
Pausing at times to rouse the mouldering fire,
Or taste the old October brown and bright.





CHARLES LAMB

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF EDITH SOUTHEY

IN Christian world *Mary* the garland wears !

Rebecca sweetens on a Hebrew's ear ;

Quakers for pure *Priscilla* are more clear ;

And the light Gaul by amorous *Ninon* swears.

Among the lesser lights how *Lucy* shines !

What air of fragrance *Rosamond* throws round !

How like a hymn doth sweet *Cecilia* sound !

Of *Marthas*, and of *Abigails*, few lines

Have bragged in verse. Of coarsest household stuff

Should homely *Joan* be fashionèd. But can

You *Barbara* resist, or *Marian* ?

And is not *Clare* for love excuse enough ?

Yet, by my faith in numbers, I profess,

These all than Saxon *Edith* please me less.





CHARLES LAMB

TO DORA WORDSWORTH, ON BEING ASKED BY
HER FATHER TO WRITE IN HER ALBUM

AN album is a banquet : from the store,
In his intelligential orchard growing,
Your sire might heap your board to overflowing ;
One shaking of the tree—'twould ask no more
To set a salad forth, more rich than that
Which Evelyn in his princely cookery fancied :
Or that more rare, by Eve's neat hand enhancèd,
Where a pleased guest, the Angelic Virtue, sat.
But, like the all-grasping founder of the feast,
Whom Nathan to the sinning king did tax,
From his less wealthy neighbours he exacts ;
Spares his own flocks, and takes the poor man's beast.
Obedient to his bidding, lo, I am,
A zealous, meek, contributory—Lamb.





JOSEPH BLANCO WHITE

NIGHT

MYSTERIOUS Night ! when our first parent knew
 Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
 Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue ?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
 Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
 Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo ! creation widened in man's view.
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
 Within thy beams, O Sun ! or who could find,
Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,
 That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind !
Why do we then shun Death with anxious strife ?
If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life ?





HORACE SMITH

ON THE STATUE OF A PIPING FAUN

HARK ! hear'st thou not the pipe of Faunus, sweeping
In dulcet glee through Thessaly's domain ?
Dost thou not see embowered wood-nymphs peeping
To watch the Graces that around him reign ;
While distant vintagers, and peasants reaping,
Stand in mute transport, listening to the strain ;
And Pan himself, beneath a pine-tree sleeping,
Looks round, and smiles, and drops to sleep again ?
O happy Greece ! while thy blest sons were rovers
Through all the loveliness this earth discovers,
They in their minds a brighter region founded,
Haunted by gods and sylvans, nymphs and lovers,
Where forms of grace through sunny landscapes
bounded,
By music and enchantment all surrounded.





EDWARD HOVEL, LORD THURLOW
THE HARVEST MOON

THE crimson Moon, uprising from the sea,
 With large delight foretells the harvest near :
Ye shepherds, now prepare your melody
 To greet the soft appearance of her sphere ;
And, like a page enamoured of her train,
 The star of evening glimmers in the west :
Then raise, ye shepherds, your observant strain,
 That so of the Great Shepherd here are blest.
Our fields are full with the time-ripened grain,
 Our vineyards with the purple clusters swell ;
Her golden splendour glimmers on the main,
 And vales and mountains her bright glory tell :
Then sing, ye shepherds, for the time is come
When we must bring the enrichèd harvest home.





JOHN WILSON

THE EVENING CLOUD

A cloud lay cradled near the setting sun ;

A gleam of crimson tinged its braided snow ;

Long had I watched the glory moving on,

O'er the still radiance of the lake below ;

Tranquil its spirit seemed and floated slow ;

Even in its very motion there was rest ;

While every breath of eve that chanced to blow

Wafted the traveller to the beauteous west.

Emblem, methought, of the departed soul,

To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is given ;

And by the breath of mercy made to roll

Right onward to the golden gates of Heaven ;

Where to the eye of Faith it peaceful lies,

And tells to man his glorious destinies.





LEIGH HUNT

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

GREEN little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass;
Oh sweet and tiny cousins, that belong
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine; both, though small, are
strong
At your clear hearts; and both were sent on earth
To sing in thoughtful ears this natural song :
In-doors and out, summer and winter, Mirth.





LEIGH HUNT

THE NILE

It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,
Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream,
And times and things, as in that vision, seem
Keeping along it their eternal stands,—
Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands
That roamed through the young world, the glory
extreme
Of high Sesostris, and that southern beam,
The laughing queen that caught the world's great
hands.
Then comes a mightier silence, stern and strong,
As of a world left empty of its throng,
And the void weighs on us; and then we wake,
And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along
'Twixt villages, and think how we shall take
Our own calm journey on for human sake.





GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON
CHILLON

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind !

Brightest in dungeons, Liberty, thou art ;
For there thy habitation is the heart,
The heart which love of thee alone can bind ;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned,
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar, for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace,
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard. May none those marks efface !
For they appeal from tyranny to God.





PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said : 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed ;
And on the pedestal these words appear :
' My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair ! '
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.





PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

YE hasten to the dead ! What seek ye there,
Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes
Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear ?
O thou quick heart, which pantest to possess
All that pale Expectation feigneth fair !
Thou vainly curious mind which wouldest guess
Whence thou didst come, and whither thou must go,
And all that never yet was known would know—
Oh, whither hasten ye, that thus ye press,
With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path,
Seeking, alike from happiness and woe,
A refuge in the cavern of gray death ?
O heart, and mind, and thoughts ! what thing do you
Hope to inherit in the grave below ?





JOHN KEATS

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

MUCH have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne ;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken ;
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.





JOHN KEATS

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

THE poetry of earth is never dead :

When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead :
That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead

In summer luxury,—he has never done

With his delights ; for when tired out with fun
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never :

On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems, to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.





JOHN KEATS

HAPPY is England ! I could be content
To see no other verdure than its own ;
To feel no other breezes than are blown
Through its tall woods with high romances blent :
Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment
For skies Italian, and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,
And half forget what world or worldling meant.
Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters ;
Enough their simple loveliness for me,
Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging :
Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,
And float with them about the summer waters.





JOHN KEATS
ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER

COME hither all sweet maidens soberly,
Down-looking aye, and with a chastened light,
Hid in the fringes of your eyelids white,
And meekly let your fair hands joinèd be,
As if so gentle that ye could not see,
Untouched, a victim of your beauty bright,
Sinking away to his young spirit's night,—
Sinking bewildered 'mid the dreary sea :
'Tis young Leander toiling to his death ;
Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips
For Hero's cheek, and smiles against her smile.
O horrid dream ! see how his body dips
Dead-heavy ; arms and shoulders gleam awhile :
He's gone : up bubbles all his amorous breath !





JOHN KEATS

TO SLEEP

O soft embalmer of the still midnight !

Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,

Our gloom-pleased eyes, embowered from the light,

Enshaded in forgetfulness divine :

O soothest Sleep ! if so it please thee, close,

In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,

Or wait the Amen, ere thy poppy throws

Around my bed its lulling charities. •

Then save me, or the passèd day will shine •

Upon my pillow, breeding many woes ; •

Save me from curious conscience, that still lords •

Its strength, for darkness burrowing like a mole ; •

Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards, •

And seal the hushèd casket of my soul. •





JOHN KEATS

AFTER dark vapours have oppressed our plains

For a long dreary season, comes a day

Born of the gentle South, and clears away
From the sick heavens all unseemly stains.

The anxious month, relievèd from its pains,

Takes as a long-lost right the feel of May ;

The eyelids with the passing coolness play,
Like rose-leaves with the drip of summer rains.

The calmest thoughts come round us ; as of leaves

Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—autumn suns
Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves—

Sweet Sappho's cheek—a sleeping infant's breath—

The gradual sand that through an hour-glass runs—
A woodland rivulet—a Poet's death.





JOHN KEATS

THE day is gone, and all its sweets are gone !

Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,
Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,

Bright eyes, accomplished shape, and lang'rous waist !
Faded the flower and all its budded charms,

Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,
Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,

Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise—
Vanished unseasonably at shut of eve,

When the dusk holiday—or holineight
Of fragrant-curtained love begins to weave

The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight ;
But, as I've read Love's missal through to-day,
He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.





JOHN KEATS

HIS LAST SONNET

BRIGHT star, would I were steadfast as thou art—

Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,

Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task

Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask

Of snow upon the mountains and the moors.—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,

Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast,
'To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,

Awake for ever in a sweet unrest ;
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.





BRYAN WALLER PROCTER

THE FIRE-FLY

TELL us, O Guide, by what strange natural laws
This wingèd flower throws out, night after night,
Such lunar brightness? Why,—for what grave cause
Is this earth-insect crowned with heavenly light?
Peace! Rest content! See where, by cliff and dell,
Past tangled forest-paths and silent river,
The little lustrous creature guides us well,
And where we fail, his small light aids us ever.
Night's charming servant! Pretty star of earth!
I ask not why thy lamp doth ever burn.
Perhaps it is thy very life,—thy mind;
And thou, if robbed of that strange right of birth,
Might be no more than Man, when death doth turn
His beauty into darkness, cold and blind.





FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

SABBATH SONNET

How many blessed groups this hour are bending,
Through England's primrose meadow-paths, their way
Towards spire and tower, 'midst shadowy elms ascending,
Whence the sweet chimes proclaim the hallowed day!
The halls from old heroic ages gray
Pour their fair children forth; and hamlets low,
With whose thick orchard-blooms the soft winds play,
Send out their inmates in a happy flow,
Like a freed vernal stream. I may not tread
With them those pathways, to the feverish bed
Of sickness bound; yet, O my God! I bless
Thy mercy, that with Sabbath peace hath filled
My chastened heart, and all its throbbings stilled
To one deep calm of lowliest thankfulness.





HARTLEY COLERIDGE

TO A FRIEND

WHEN we were idlers with the loitering rills,
The need of human love we little noted :
Our love was nature ; and the peace that floated
On the white mist, and dwelt upon the hills,
To sweet accord subdued our wayward wills :
One soul was ours, one mind, one heart devoted,
That wisely doating asked not why it doated,
And ours the unknown joy which knowing kills.
But now I find how dear thou wert to me ;
That man is more than half of nature's treasure,
Of that fair beauty which no eye can see,
Of that sweet music which no ear can measure ;
And now the streams may sing for others' pleasure,
The hills sleep on in their eternity.





HARTLEY COLERIDGE

LONG time a child, and still a child, when years
Had painted manhood on my cheek, was I ;
For yet I lived like one not born to die :
A thriftless prodigal of smiles and tears,
No hope I needed, and I knew no fears.

But sleep, though sweet, is only sleep, and waking
I waked to sleep no more, at once o'ertaking
The vanguard of my age, with all arrears
Of duty on my back. Nor child, nor man,
Nor youth, nor sage, I find my head is grey ;
For I have lost the race I never ran :

A rathe December blights my lagging May,
And still I am a child, though I be old :
Time is my debtor for my years untold.





HARTLEY COLERIDGE

NIGHT

THE crackling embers on the hearth are dead ;
The indoor note of industry is still ;
The latch is fast ; upon the window-sill
The small birds wait not for their daily bread ;
The voiceless flowers—how quietly they shed
Their nightly odours ; and the household rill
Murmurs continuous dulcet sounds that fill
The vacant expectation, and the dread
Of listening night. And haply now She sleeps
For all the garrulous noises of the air
Are hushed in peace ; the soft dew silent weeps,
Like hopeless lovers for a maid so fair :—
Oh ! that I were the happy dream that creeps
To her soft heart, to find my image there.





HARTLEY COLERIDGE

IF I have sinned in act, I may repent ;
If I have erred in thought, I may disclaim
My silent error, and yet feel no shame :
But if my soul, big with an ill intent,
Guilty in will, by fate be innocent,
Or being bad, yet murmurs at the curse
And incapacity of being worse,
That makes my hungry passion still keep Lent
In keen expectance of a Carnival,—
Where, in all worlds that round the sun revolve,
And shed their influence on this passive ball,
Abides a power that can my soul absolve ?
Could any sin survive and be forgiven,
One sinful wish would make a hell of heaven.



HARTLEY COLERIDGE

THINK upon Death, 'tis good to think of Death,
But better far to think upon the Dead.
Death is a spectre with a bony head,
Or the mere mortal body without breath,
The state foredoomed of every son of Seth,
Decomposition—dust, or dreamless sleep.
But the dear Dead are they for whom we weep,
For whom I credit all the Bible saith.
Dead is my father, dead is my good mother,
And what on earth have I to do but die ?
But if by grace I reach the blessed sky,
I fain would see the same, and not another ;
The very father that I used to see,
The mother that has nursed me on her knee.





THOMAS HOOD

DEATH

It is not death, that sometime in a sigh
 This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight ;
 That sometime these bright stars, that now reply
 In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night ;
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
 And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow ;
 That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal Sprite
 Be lapped in alien clay and laid below ;
It is not death to know this,—but to know
 That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
 In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
 So duly and so oft,—and when grass waves
Over the past-away, there may be then
 No resurrection in the minds of men.





SAMUEL LAMAN BLANCHARD

HIDDEN JOYS

PLEASURES lie thickest where no pleasures seem :
There's not a leaf that falls upon the ground,
But holds some joy of silence or of sound,
Some sprite begotten of a summer dream.
The very meanest things are made supreme
With innate ecstasy. No grain of sand,
But moves a bright and million-peopled land,
And hath its Edens and its Eves, I deem.
For Love, though blind himself, a curious eye
Hath lent me, to behold the hearts of things,
And touched mine ear with power. Thus, far or nigh,
Minute or mighty, fixed or free with wings,
Delight from many a nameless covert sly
Peeps sparkling, and in tones familiar sings.





RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH,
ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

A WRETCHED thing it were, to have our heart
Like a broad highway or a populous street,
Where every idle thought has leave to meet,
Pause, or pass on, as in an open mart ;
Or like some road-side pool, which no nice art
Has guarded that the cattle may not beat
And foul it with a multitude of feet,
Till of the heavens it can give back no part.
But keep thou thine a holy solitude ;
For He, who would walk there, would walk alone ;
He who would drink there, must be first endued
With single right to call that stream His own.
Keep thou thine heart close-fastened, unrevealed,
A fenced garden and a fountain sealed.





ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

UNLIKE are we, unlike, O princely Heart !
Unlike our uses and our destinies.
Our ministering two angels look surprise
On one another, as they strike athwart
Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art
A guest for queens to social pageantries,
With gages from a hundred brighter eyes
Than tears even can make mine, to play thy part
Of chief musician. What hast *thou* to do
With looking from the lattice-lights at me,
A poor, tired, wandering singer, singing through
The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree ?
The chrism is on thine head,—on mine, the dew,—
And Death must dig the level where these agree.





ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore—
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.





ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

WHAT can I give thee back, O liberal
And princely giver, who hast brought the gold
And purple of thine heart, unstained, untold,
And laid them on the outside of the wall
For such as I to take or leave withal,
In unexpected largesse ? am I cold,
Ungrateful, that for these most manifold
High gifts, I render nothing back at all ?
Not so ; not cold,—but very poor instead.
Ask God who knows. For frequent tears have run
The colours from my life, and left so dead
And pale a stuff, it were not fitly done
To give the same as pillow to thy head.
Go farther ! let it serve to trample on.





ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

IF I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors, another home than this?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Filled by dead eyes, too tender to know change?
That's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,
To conquer grief, tries more, as all things prove;
For grief indeed is love and grief beside.
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love.
Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,
And fold within the wet wings of thy dove.





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ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

WHEN our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher.
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvèd point,—what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Belovèd,—where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.





ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

My letters! all dead paper, mute and white!
And yet they seem alive and quivering
Against my tremulous hands which loose the string
And let them drop down on my knee to-night.
This said,—he wished to have me in his sight
Once, as a friend: this fixed a day in spring
To come and touch my hand . . . a simple thing,
Yet I wept for it!—this, . . . the paper's light . . .
Said, *Dear, I love thee*; and I sank and quailed,
As if God's future thundered on my past.
This said, *I am thine*—and so its ink has paled
With lying at my heart that beat too fast.
And this . . . O Love, thy words have ill availed
If, what this said, I dared repeat at last!





CHARLES TENNYSON-TURNER

THE LATTICE AT SUNRISE

As on my bed at dawn I mused and prayed,
I saw my lattice pranked upon the wall
The flaunting leaves and flitting birds withal—
A sunny phantom interlaced with shade :
‘Thanks be to Heaven!’ in happy mood I said,
‘What sweeter aid my matins could befall
Than this fair glory from the East hath made?
What holy sleights hath God, the Lord of all,
To bid us feel and see! we are not free
To say we see not, for the glory comes
Nightly and daily, like the flowing sea ;
His lustre pierceth through the midnight glooms
And at prime hour, behold ! He follows me
With golden shadows to my secret rooms !’





CHARLES TENNYSON-TURNER

LETTY'S GLOBE

WHEN Letty had scarce passed her third glad year,
And her young, artless words began to flow,
One day we gave the child a coloured sphere
Of the wide earth, that she might mark and know,
By tint and outline, all its sea and land.

She patted all the world ; old empires peeped
Between her baby fingers ; her soft hand
Was welcome at all frontiers. How she leaped,
And laughed, and prattled in her world-wide bliss ;
But when we turned her sweet unlearnèd eye
On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry,
'Oh ! yes, I see it, Letty's home is there !'
And, while she hid all England with a kiss,
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.





CHARLES TENNYSON-TURNER

THE QUIET TIDE NEAR ARDROSSAN

ON to the beach the quiet waters crept :

But, though I stood not far within the land,
No tidal murmur reached me from the strand.
The mirrored clouds beneath old Arran slept.

I looked again across the watery waste :

The shores were full, the tide was near its height,
Though scarcely heard : the reefs were drowning fast,
And an imperial whisper told the might

Of the outer floods, that pressed into the bay,

Though all besides was silent. I delight
In the rough billows, and the foam-ball's flight :

I love the shore upon a stormy day ;

But yet more stately were the power and ease
That with a whisper deepened all the seas.





FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE

COVER me with your everlasting arms,
 Ye guardian giants of this solitude !
 From the ill-sight of men, and from the rude
Tumultuous din of yon wild world's alarms !
Oh, knit your mighty limbs around, above,
 And close me in for ever ! let me dwell
 With the wood-spirits, in the darkest cell
That ever with your verdant locks ye wove.
 The air is full of countless voices, joined
 In one eternal hymn ; the whispering wind,
The shuddering leaves, the hidden water-springs,
The work-song of the bees, whose honeyed wings
 Hang in the golden tresses of the lime,
 Or buried lie in purple beds of thyme.





GEORGE MORINE

SUNSET

DAY—like a conqueror marching to his rest,
The warfare finished and the victory won,
And all the pageant of his triumph done—
Seeks his resplendent chamber in the West :
Yon clouds, like pursuivants and heralds drest
In gorgeous blazonry, troop slowly on,
Bearing abroad the banners of the sun,
That proudly stream o'er many a warrior's crest.
In the azure field a solitary star
Lifts its pale signal, and the glorious train
Of errant sunbeams, straggling from afar,
Re-form their glittering ranks, and join again
Their father Phœbus in his golden car,
Whose panting steeds have snuffed the western main.





RICHARD MONCKTON MILNEŠ,
LORD HOUGHTON

ON TURNER'S PICTURE OF THE *TÉMÉRAIRE*

SEE how the small concentrate fiery force
Is grappling with the glory of the main,
That follows like some grave heroic corse,
Dragged by a sutler from the heap of slain.
Thy solemn presence brings us more than pain—
Something which fancy moulds into remorse,
That we, who of thine honour held the gain,
Should from its dignity thy form divorce.
Yet will we read in thy high vaunting name,
How Britain did what France could only dare,
And, while the sunset gilds the darkening air,
We will fill up thy shadowy lines with fame,
And, tomb or temple, hail thee still the same,
Home of great thoughts, memorial *Téméraire* !





HENRY ALFORD,
DEAN OF CANTERBURY

Rise, said the Master, come unto the feast :—
 She heard the call and rose with willing feet ;
 But thinking it not otherwise than meet
For such a bidding to put on her best,
She is gone from us for a few short hours
 Into her bridal closet, there to wait
 For the unfolding of the palace-gate,
That gives her entrance to the blissful bowers.
We have not seen her yet, though we have been
 Full often to her chamber-door, and oft
Have listened underneath the postern green,
 And laid fresh flowers, and whispered short and soft ;
But she hath made no answer ; and the day
From the clear west is fading fast away.





AUBREY DE VERE

THE SUN GOD

I SAW the Master of the Sun. He stood
High in his luminous car, himself more bright ;
An Archer of immeasurable might :
On his left shoulder hung his quivered load ;
Spurned by his Steeds the eastern mountain glowed ;
Forward his eager eye, and brow of light
He bent ; and, while both hands that arch embowed
Shaft after shaft pursued the flying Night.

No wings profaned that godlike form ; around
His neck high-held an ever-moving crowd
Of locks hung glistening ; while such perfect sound
Fell from his bowstring, that th' ethereal dome
Thrilled as a dewdrop ; and each passing cloud
Expanded, whitening like the ocean foam.





AUBREY DE VERE

SORROW

COUNT each affliction, whether light or grave,
God's messenger sent down to thee ; do thou
With courtesy receive him ; rise and bow ;
And, ere his shadow pass thy threshold, crave
Permission first his heavenly feet to lave ;
Then lay before him all thou hast : allow
No cloud of passion to usurp thy brow,
Or mar thy hospitality ; no wave
Of mortal tumult to obliterate
The soul's marmoreal calmness : Grief should be,
Like joy, majestic, equable, sedate,
Confirming, cleansing, raising, making free ;
Strong to consume small troubles ; to commend
Great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts lasting to
the end.





JEAN INGELow

AN ANCIENT CHESS KING

HAPLY some Rajah first in ages gone

Amid his languid ladies fingered thee,

While a black nightingale, sun-swart as he,

Sang his one wife, love's passionate orison :

Haply thou mayst have pleased old Prester John

Among his pastures, when full royally

He sat in tent—grave shepherds at his knee—

While lamps of balsam winked and glimmered on.

What dost thou here ? Thy masters are all dead ;

My heart is full of ruth and yearning pain

At sight of thee, O king that hast a crown

Outlasting theirs, and tells of greatness fled

Through cloud-hung nights of unabated rain

And murmur of the dark majestic town.





MATTHEW ARNOLD

QUIET WORK

ONE lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one,
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—

Of toil unsevered from tranquillity !
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry !

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,

Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting ;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.





MATTHEW ARNOLD

SHAKESPEARE

OTHERS abide our question—Thou art free.
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge For the loftiest hill
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foiled searching of Mortality ;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honoured, self-secure,
Didst walk on earth unguessed at.—Better so !

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.





MATTHEW ARNOLD

EAST LONDON

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said :
' Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene ?'
' Bravely,' said he ; ' for I of late have been
Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, *the living bread.*'

O human soul ! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam,
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night !
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.





WILLIAM CALDWELL ROSCOE

LIKE a musician, that with flying finger
Startles the voice of some new instrument,
And, though he know that in one string are blent
All its extremes of sound, yet still doth linger
Among the lighter threads, fearing to start
The deep soul of that one melodious wire,
Lest it, unanswering, dash his high desire,
And spoil the hopes of his expectant heart ;—
Thus with my mistress oft conversing, I
Stir every lighter theme with careless voice,
Gathering sweet music and celestial joys
From the harmonious soul o'er which I fly ;
Yet o'er the one deep master-chord I hover,
And dare not stoop, fearing to tell—I love her.





WILLIAM CALDWELL ROSCOE
TO A FRIEND

SAD soul, whom God, resuming what He gave,
Medicines with bitter anguish of the tomb,
Cease to oppress the portals of the grave,
And strain thy aching sight across the gloom.
The surged Atlantic's winter-beaten wave
Shall sooner pierce the purpose of the wind
Than thy storm-tossed and heavy-swelling mind
Grasp the full import of his means to save.
Through the dark night lie still ; God's faithful grace
Lies hid, like morning, underneath the sea.
Let thy slow hours roll, like these weary stars,
Down to the level ocean patiently ;
Till his loved hand shall touch the Eastern bars,
And his full glory shine upon thy face.





JULIAN FANE

AD MATREM

How many a year hath Time, with felon hand,
 Filched from the sum of my allotted days,
Alas, with no performance that may stand
 In warrant of a well-earned meed of praise!
Time hath the forehead of my life belined,
 And clipt my youth with his accursèd shears,
Hath made companionable Joy unkind,
 And taught mine eyes the fellowship of tears.
His false hands falsely have my mind assailed,
 Thence stealing many a secret of sweet pleasure;
But his foiled fingers nothing have prevailed
 Against my heart—the casket of my treasure.
My love of thee preserved in its fresh prime,
I, robbed, left rich; how poor a thief is Time!





JULIAN FANE

AD MATREM

O VISIONED face unutterably fair,
How oft when blackness muffled up the night,
And tempest-laden was the surcharged air,
Nor any hope appeared of starry light,
How often, lucent as the full-faced moon,
When suddenly she rends the clouded fleece,
Hath thy sweet influence, like an un hoped boon,
Turned dark to bright, and tempest into peace!
Queen of my night of sorrows hast thou been,
Whose countenance of good all evil mars,
Knowing to crown with hopeful light serene
Earth's darksome vault when most forlorn of stars,
And to convert clouds bodeful of despair
To silver-suited omens good and fair.





JOHN, LORD HANMER
THE OLD FISHER

THOU art a fisher of Mazorbo ; lone,
Drifting a usual shadow o'er the sea,
With thine old boat, that, like a barkless tree,
Creaks in the wind, a pitchless dreary moan ;
And there thy life and all thy thoughts have flown,
Pouncing on crabs in shallows, till thy knee,
Crooked as theirs, now halts unsteadily,
Going about to move the anchor-stone ;
And when the waves roll inward from the east,
Takest thy net, and for some few sardines
Toil'st in the morning's wild and chilly ray ;
Then dost thou go to where yon bell-tower leans,
And in the sunshine sit, the poor man's feast,
Else abstinent in thy poverty, all the day.





JOHN, LORD HANMER
THE PINE WOODS

We stand upon the moorish mountain side
From age to age, a solemn company ;
There are no voices in our paths, but we
Hear the great whirlwinds roaring loud and wide ;
And like the sea-waves have our boughs replied,
From the beginning, to their stormy glee ;
The thunder rolls above us, and some tree
Smites with his bolt, yet doth the race abide ;
Answering all times ; but joyous when the sun
Glints on the peaks that clouds no longer bear ;
And the young shoots to flourish have begun ;
And the quick seeds through the blue odorous air
From the expanding cones fall one by one ;
And silence as in temples dwelleth there.





DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

LOVESIGHT

WHEN do I see thee most, beloved one ?

When in the light the spirits of mine eyes

Before thy face, their altar, solemnize

The worship of that Love through thee made known ?

Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)

Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies

Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,

And my soul only sees thy soul its own ?

O love, my love ! if I no more should see

Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,

Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—

How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope

The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,

The wind of Death's imperishable wing ?





DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

THE PORTRAIT

O LORD of all compassionate control,
O Love! let this my lady's picture glow
Under my hand to praise her name, and show
Even of her inner self the perfect whole:
That he who seeks her beauty's furthest goal,
Beyond the light that the sweet glances throw
And refluent wave of the sweet smile, may know
The very sky and sea-line of her soul.

Lo! it is done. Above the enthroning throat
The mouth's mould testifies of voice and kiss,
The shadowed eyes remember and foresee.
Her face is made her shrine. Let all men note
That in all years (O Love, thy gift is this!)
They that would look on her must come to me.





DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

THE MORROW'S MESSAGE

‘THOU Ghost,’ I said, ‘and is thy name To-day?—

Yesterday’s son, with such an abject brow!—

And can To-morrow be more pale than thou?’

While yet I spoke, the silence answered: ‘Yea,

Henceforth our issue is all grieved and grey,

And each beforehand makes such poor avow

As of old leaves beneath the budding bough

Or night-drift that the sundawn shreds away.’

Then cried I: ‘Mother of many malisons,

O Earth, receive me to thy dusty bed!’

But therewithal the tremulous silence said:

‘Lo! Love yet bids thy lady greet thee once:—

Yea, twice,—whereby thy life is still the sun’s;

And thrice,—whereby the shadow of death is dead.’





DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
SLEEPLESS DREAMS

GIRT in dark growths, yet glimmering with one star,
O night, desirous as the nights of youth!

Why should my heart within thy spell, forsooth,
Now beat, as the bride's finger-pulses are
Quickened within the girdling golden bar?

What wings are these that fan my pillow smooth?
And why does Sleep, waved back by Joy and Ruth,
Tread softly round and gaze at me from far?

Nay, night deep-leaved! And would Love feign in
thee

Some shadowy palpitating grove that bears
Rest for man's eyes and music for his ears?
O lonely night! art thou not known to me,
A thicket hung with masks of mockery
And watered with the wasteful warmth of tears?





DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

NEWBORN DEATH

AND thou, O Life, the lady of all bliss,
 With whom, when our first heart beat full and fast,
 I wandered till the haunts of men were passed,
And in fair places found all bowers amiss
Till only woods and waves might hear our kiss,
 While to the winds all thought of Death we cast :—
 Ah, Life ! and must I have from thee at last
No smile to greet me and no babe but this ?

Lo ! Love, the child once ours ; and Song, whose hair
 Blew like a flame and blossomed like a wreath ;
And Art, whose eyes were worlds by God found fair :
 These o'er the book of Nature mixed their breath
With neck-twined arms, as oft we watched them there ;
 And did these die that thou mightst bear me Death ?





DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

LOST DAYS

THE lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The throats of men in Hell, who thirst alway?

I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
‘I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me?’
‘And I—and I—thyself,’ (lo! each one saith,)
‘And thou thyself to all eternity!’





DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
WILLOWWOOD. I

I SAT with Love upon a woodside well,
 Leaning across the water, I and he ;
 Nor ever did he speak nor looked at me,
But touched his lute wherein was audible
The certain secret thing he had to tell :
 Only our mirrored eyes met silently
 In the low wave ; and that sound came to be
The passionate voice I knew ; and my tears fell.

And at their fall, his eyes beneath grew hers ;
And with his foot and with his wing-feathers
 He swept the spring that watered my heart's drouth.
Then the dark ripples spread to waving hair,
And as I stooped, her own lips rising there
 Bubbled with brimming kisses at my mouth.





DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

WILLOWWOOD. II

AND now Love sang : but his was such a song,
 So meshed with half-remembrance hard to free,
 As souls disused in death's sterility
May sing when the new birthday tarries long.
And I was made aware of a dumb throng
 That stood aloof, one form by every tree,
 All mournful forms, for each was I or she,
The shades of those our days that had no tongue.
They looked on us, and knew us and were known ;
 While fast together, alive from the abyss,
 Clung the soul-wrung implacable close kiss ;
And pity of self through all made broken moan
Which said, ' For once, for once, for once alone ! '
 And still Love sang, and what he sang was this :—





DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

WILLOWWOOD. III

‘ O YE, all ye that walk in Willowwood,
That walk with hollow faces burning white ;
What fathom-depth of soul-struck widowhood,
What long, what longer hours, one lifelong night,
Ere ye again, who so in vain have wooed
Your last hope lost, who so in vain invite
Your lips to that their unforgotten food,
Ere ye, ere ye again shall see the light !

Alas ! the bitter banks in Willowwood,
With tear-spurge wan, with blood-wort burning red :
Alas ! if ever such a pillow could

Steep deep the soul in sleep till she were dead,—
Better all life forget her than this thing,
That Willowwood should hold her wandering ! ’





DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

WILLOWWOOD. IV

So sang he : and as meeting rose and rose
 Together cling through the wind's wellaway
 Nor change at once, yet near the end of day
The leaves drop loosened where the heart-stain glows,—
So when the song died did the kiss unclose ;
 And her face fell back drowned, and was as grey
 As its grey eyes ; and if it ever may
Meet mine again I know not if Love knows.

Only I know that I leaned low and drank
A long draught from the water where she sank,
 Her breath and all her tears and all her soul :
And as I leaned, I know I felt Love's face
Pressed on my neck with moan of pity and grace,
 Till both our heads were in his aureole.





CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

REMEMBER

REMEMBER me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land ;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more, day by day,
You tell me of our future that you planned :
Only remember me ; you understand,
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve ;
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad





CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

AFTER DEATH

THE curtains were half drawn, the floor was swept
And strewn with rushes, rosemary and may
Lay thick upon the bed on which I lay,
Where through the lattice ivy-shadows crept.
He leaned above me, thinking that I slept
And could not hear him ; but I heard him say .
‘ Poor child, poor child ! ’ and as he turned away
Came a deep silence, and I knew he wept.
He did not touch the shroud, or raise the fold
That hid my face, or take my hand in his,
Or ruffle the smooth pillows for my head :
He did not love me living ; but once dead
He pitied me ; and very sweet it is
To know he still is warm, though I am cold.





CHRISTINA ROSSETTI
FROM SUNSET TO STAR RISE

Go from me, summer friends, and tarry not ;
 I am no summer friend, but wintry cold,
 A silly sheep benighted from the fold,
A sluggard with a thorn-choked garden plot.
Take counsel, sever from my lot your lot,
 Dwell in your pleasant places, hoard your gold ;
 Lest you with me should shiver on the wold,
Athirst and hungering on a barren spot.
For I have hedged me with a thorny hedge,
 I live alone, I look to die alone :
Yet sometimes when a wind sighs through the sedge
Ghosts of my buried years and friends come back,
 My heart goes sighing after swallows flown
On sometime summer's unreturning track.





CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

LOVE LIES BLEEDING

Love that is dead and buried, yesterday
 Out of his grave rose up before my face ;
 No recognition in his look, no trace
Of memory in his eyes dust-dimmed and grey :
While I, remembering, found no word to say,
 But felt my quickened heart leap in its place ;
 Caught afterglow thrown back from long set days,
Caught echoes of all music passed away.
Was this indeed to meet ?—I mind me yet
 In youth we met when hope and love were quick,
 We parted with hope dead, but love alive :
I mind me how we parted then heart sick,
 Remembering, loving, hopeless, weak to strive :—
Was this to meet ? Not so, we have not met.





CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

VANITY OF VANITIES

AH, woe is me for pleasure that is vain,
 Ah, woe is me for glory that is past,
 Pleasure that bringeth sorrow at the last,
Glory that at the last bringeth no gain !
So saith the sinking heart ; and so again
 It shall say till the mighty angel-blast
 Is blown, making the sun and moon aghast,
And showering down the stars like sudden rain.
And evermore men shall go fearfully,
 Bending beneath their weight of heaviness ;
And ancient men shall lie down wearily,
 And strong men shall rise up in weariness ;
Yea, even the young shall answer sighingly,
 Saying one to another : How vain it is !





ALEXANDER SMITH

BEAUTY still walketh on the earth and air :
Our present sunsets are as rich in gold
As ere the Iliad's music was out-rolled ;
The roses of the Spring are ever fair,
'Mong branches green still ring-doves coo and pair,
And the deep sea still foams its music old ;
So, if we are at all divinely souled,
This beauty will unloose our bonds of care.
'Tis pleasant, when blue skies are o'er us bending,
Within old starry-gated Poesy,
To meet a soul set to no worldly tune,
Like thine, sweet Friend ! Oh, dearer this to me
Than are the dewy trees, the sun, the moon,
Or noble music with a golden ending.





SEBASTIAN EVANS

RELIGIO POETÆ

HELP thou, but be not holpen. If need be,
Give men what ware thou hast worth gold, for gold ;
And, so thy tale of ware be truly told,
Buy Freedom as thou wilt,—but be thou free !
Here close thy count with man. Save this to thee
Be there no reckoning made of bought and sold,
But live the life God gives thee, and withhold
Thy nobler hand from aught of earthly fee.
Stand four-square to the world for praise or blame :
Deserve, but touch no guerdon. Name and fame,
Titles and useless wealth, leave thou to them
Who can be paid thereby. Such be not thou !
True work, true love can spare the laurelled brow :
The great are greatest with no diadem.





ROBERT, EARL OF LYTTON
EVENING

ALREADY evening ! In the duskiest nook
Of yon dusk corner, under the Death's-head,
Between the alembics, thrust this legended,
And iron-bound, and melancholy book,
For I will read no longer. The loud brook
Shelves his sharp light up shallow banks thin-spread ;
The slumbrous west grows slowly red, and red :
Up from the ripened corn her silver hook
The moon is lifting : and deliciously
Along the warm blue hills the day declines :
The first star brightens while she waits for me,
And round her swelling heart the zone grows tight :
Musing, half-sad, in her soft hair she twines
The white rose, whispering, ' He will come to-night ! '





JAMES THOMSON

A RECUSANT

THE Church stands there beyond the orchard-blooms :

How yearningly I gaze upon its spire !

Lifted mysterious through the twilight glooms,

Dissolving in the sunset's golden fire,

Or dim as slender incense morn by morn

Ascending to the blue and open sky.

For ever when my heart feels most forlorn

It murmurs to me with a weary sigh,

How sweet to enter in, to kneel and pray

With all the others whom we love so well !

All disbelief and doubt might pass away,

All peace float to us with its Sabbath bell.

Conscience replies, There is but one good rest,

Whose head is pillowed upon Truth's pure breast.





JOHN LEICESTER WARREN,
LORD DE TABLEY
ECHOES OF HELLAS

O choir of Tempe mute these many years,
O fountain lutes of lyric Hippocrene,
On whose polluted brink no Muse is seen.
No more between the gleaming vales one hears
Apollo's footfall or the sobbing tears
Of Daphne, budding finger-tips of green.
No nymphs are bathing with their huntress Queen
In the warm shallows of the mountain meres.

Great Pan is dead: he perished long ago:
His reedy pipes these uplands never heard.
What trembling sounds from yonder coppice come?
Some ravished queen, who tells the dale her woe?
Nay, since the maids Pierian here are dumb,
The nightingale is nothing but a bird.





JOHN LEICESTER WARREN,
LORD DE TABLEY

THE SAINT AND THE SUN

I HEARD a Saint cry to the Sun—‘ Be dim.
Why shouldst thou rule on high with boastful ray,
Till fools adore thee as the God of Day,
Robbing thy master’s honour due to him ? ’
But the sun-spirit, thro’ each radiant limb
Translucent as a living ember coal,
Glowed. At the anger of the seraph soul
His golden orb trembled from boss to rim.

Then made he answer as a dove that sings,
‘ God’s glory is my glory, and my praise
Only his praising. They, who kneel to me,
See thro’ the waving of my orient wings
A choir of stars with voices like the sea,
Singing hosanna in the heavenly ways.’





JOHN LEICESTER WARREN,
LORD DE TABLEY
THE TWO OLD KINGS

In ruling well what guerdon? Life runs low,
As yonder lamp upon the hour-glass lies,
Waning and wasted. We are great and wise,
But Love is gone; and Silence seems to grow
Along the misty road where we must go.
From summits near the morning star's uprise,
Death comes, a shadow from the northern skies,
As, when all leaves are down, thence comes the snow.

Brother and King, we hold our last carouse.
One loving cup we drain and then farewell.
The night is spent. The crystal morning ray
Calls us, as soldiers laurelled on our brows,
To march undaunted, while the clarions swell,
Heroic hearts, upon our lonely way.





WILLIAM BELL SCOTT
THE UNIVERSE VOID

REVOLVING worlds, revolving systems, yea,
 Revolving firmaments, nor there we end :
 Systems of firmaments revolving, send
Our thoughts across the Infinite astray,
Gasping and lost and terrified, the day
 Of life, the goodly interests of home,
 Shrivelled to nothing ; that unbounded dome
Peeling still on, in blind fatality.

No rest is there for our soul's wingèd feet,
 She must return for shelter to her ark—
The body, fair, frail, death-born, incomplete,
 And let her bring this truth back from the dark :
Life is self-centred, man is nature's god ;
Space, time, are but the walls of his abode.





RICHARD GARNETT

AGE

I WILL not rail or grieve when torpid eld
 Frosts the slow-journeying blood, for I shall see
 The lovelier leaves hang yellow on the tree,
The nimbler brooks in icy fetters held.
Methinks the aged eye that first beheld
 Pale Autumn in her waning pageantry,
 Then knew himself, dear Nature, child of thee,
Marking the common doom, that all compelled.
No kindred we to thy belovèd broods,
 If, dying these, we drew a selfish breath;
But one path travel all their multitudes,
 And none dispute the solemn voice that saith:
'Sun to thy setting; to your autumn, woods;
 Stream to thy sea; and man unto thy death!'





RICHARD GARNETT

THE TAPER

THIS little light is not a little sign
Of duteous service innocent of blame,
Contented with obscurity till came
Mandate that as a star her beam should shine.
On sickness did she wait, or scribe, or shrine,
The law of her beneficence the same,
Somewhat to sunder from her fragile frame,
Something of her own being to resign.
So wasted now, that, let the lustre be
Resummoned but once more, the fuel dies ;
Yet virtues six adorn her brevity,
Singly too seldom met of mortal eyes ;
Discretion, faithfulness, frugality,
Purity, vigilance, self-sacrifice.





RICHARD GARNETT

WRITTEN IN MILES' "POETS OF
THE CENTURY"

I SAW the youthful singers of my day

To sound of lutes and lyres in morning hours

Trampling with eager feet the teeming flowers,

Bound for Fame's temple upon Music's way :

A happy band, a folk of holiday :

But some lay down and slept among the bowers

Some turned aside to fanes of alien Powers ;

Some Death took by the hand and led away.

Now gathering twilight clouds the land with grey,

Yet, where last light is lit, last pilgrims go,

Outlined in gliding shade by dying glow,

And fain with weary fortitude essay

The last ascent. The end is hid, but they

Who follow on my step shall surely know.





THOMAS ASHE

THE BROOK

BROOK, happy brook, that glidest through my dell
That trippest with soft feet across the mead ;
That, laughing on, a mazy course dost lead,
O'er pebble beds, and reeds, and rushy swell ;
Go by that cottage where my love doth dwell.
Ripple thy sweetest ripple, sing the best
Of melodies thou hast ; lull her to rest
With such sweet tales as thou dost love to tell.
Say, ' One is sitting in your wood to-night,
O maiden rare, to catch a glimpse of you ;
A shadow fleet, or but a window-light,
Shall make him glad, and thrill his spirit through.'
Brook, happy brook, I pray, go lingering ;
And underneath the rosy lattice sing.





ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

TO THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

(DEDICATION: "TRISTRAM OF LYONESSE
AND OTHER POEMS")

SPRING speaks again, and all our woods are stirred,
And all our wide glad wastes aflower around,
That twice have heard keen April's clarion sound
Since here we first together saw and heard
Spring's light reverberate and reiterate word
Shine forth and speak in season. Life stands crowned
Here with the best one thing it ever found,
As of my soul's best birthdays dawns the third.

There is a friend that as the wise man saith
Cleaves closer than a brother: nor to me
Hath time not shown, through days like waves at
strife,
This truth more sure than all things else but death,
This pearl most perfect found in all the sea
That washes toward your feet these waifs of life.

The Pines, April 1882





ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

A REMINISCENCE

(PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON)

THE rose to the wind has yielded : all its leaves
Lie strewn on the graveyard grass, and all their light
And colour and fragrance leave our sense and sight
Bereft as a man whom bitter time bereaves
Of blossom at once and hope of garnered sheaves,
Of April at once and August. Day to night
Calls wailing, and life to death, and depth to height,
And soul upon soul of man that hears and grieves.

Who knows, though he see the snow-cold blossom shed,
If haply the heart that burned within the rose,
The spirit in sense, the life of life be dead?
If haply the wind that slays with storming snows
Be one with the wind that quickens? Bow thine head,
O Sorrow, and commune with thine heart : who
knows?





ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE
TRANSFIGURATION

BUT half a man's days—and his days were nights.
What hearts were ours who loved him, should we pray
That night would yield him back to darkling day,
Sweet death that soothes, to life that spoils and smites?
For now, perchance, life lovelier than the light's
That shed no comfort on his weary way
Shows him what none may dream to see or say
Ere yet the soul may scale those topless heights
Where death lies dead, and triumph. Haply there
Already may his kindling eyesight find
Faces of friends—no face than his more fair—
And first among them found of all his kind
Milton, with crowns from Eden on his hair,
And eyes that meet a brother's now not blind.





ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

THE LAST WORD

So many a dream and hope that went and came,
 So many and sweet, that love thought like to be,
 Of hours as bright and soft as those for me
That made our hearts for song's sweet love the same,
Lie now struck dead, that hope seems one with shame.
 O Death, thy name is Love: we know it, and see
 The witness: yet for very love's sake we
Can hardly bear to mix with thine his name.

Philip, how hard it is to bid thee part
Thou knowest, if aught thou knowest where now thou art
 Of us that loved and love thee. None may tell
What none but knows—how hard it is to say
The word that seals up sorrow, darkens day,
 And bids fare forth the soul it bids farewell.





ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE
TO DR. JOHN BROWN

BEYOND the north wind lay the land of old
Where men dwelt blithe and blameless, clothed and
fed
With joy's bright raiment and with love's sweet bread,
The whitest flock of earth's maternal fold.
None there might wear about his brows enrolled
A light of lovelier fame than rings your head,
Whose lovesome love of children and the dead
All men give thanks for : I far off behold
A dear dead hand that links us, and a light
The blithest and benignest of the night,
The night of death's sweet sleep, wherein may be
A star to show your spirit in present sight
Some happier island in the Elysian sea
Where Rab may lick the hand of Marjorie.





ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE
ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT BROWNING

A GRACELESS doom it seems that bids us grieve :
 Venice and winter, hand in deadly hand,
 Have slain the lover of her sunbright strand
And singer of a stormbright Christmas Eve.
A graceless guerdon we that loved receive
 For all our love, from that the dearest land
 Love worshipped ever. Blithe and soft and bland,
Too fair for storm to scathe or fire to cleave,
Shone on our dreams and memories evermore
The domes, the towers, the mountains and the shore
 That gird or guard thee, Venice : cold and black
Seems now the face we loved as he of yore.
 We have given thee love—no stint, no stay, no lack :
 What gift, what gift is this thou hast given us back ?





JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

THE SEA CALLS

AWAY, away ! The ruffling breezes call ;
The slack waves rippling at the smooth flat keel ;
The swanlike swerving of the queenly steel ;
The sails that flap against their masts and fall ;
The dip of oars in time, the musical
Cry of the statue-poised lithe gondolier ;
The scent of seaweeds from the sea-girt mere ;
The surge that frets on Malamocco's wall ;
The solitary gun San Giorgio peals ;
The murmurous pigeons, pensioners of St. Mark ;
The deep tongues of the slender campaniles ;
The song that fitful floats across the dark ;
All sounds, all sights, all scents born of the sea,
Venezia, call and call me back to thee !





JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

REBUKE me not! I have nor wish nor skill
To alter one hair's breadth in all this house
Of Love, rising with domes so luminous
And air-built galleries on life's topmost hill!
Only I know that fate, chance, years that kill,
Change that transmutes, have aimed their darts at us;
Envyng each lovely shrine and amorous
Reared on earth's soil by man's too passionate will.
Dread thou the moment when these glittering towers,
These adamantine walls and gates of gems,
Shall fade like forms of sun-forsaken cloud;
When dulled by imperceptible chill hours,
The golden spires of our Jerusalems
Shall melt to mist and vanish in night's shroud!





JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

)

MUSING on Venice and the thought of thee,
Thou resolute angel, sleep o'erspread my brain ;
Brief solace blossomed from the root of pain,
For in my dream thou wert at one with me :
No longer restless like that clear blue sea,
No longer lost in schemes of sordid gain,
No longer unattainable by strain
Of futile arms and false love's mockery ;
But tranquil, with thy large eyes fixed on mine ;
Love's dove-wings moving on thy soul's abyss ;
Thy lips half-opened, and thy breast divine
Scarce heaving with an unacknowledged bliss ;
And all the golden glory that is thine,
Communicated in a long close kiss.





JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

NEVER, oh never more shall I behold

A sunrise on the glacier :—stars of morn

Paling in primrose round the crystal horn ;

Soft curves of crimson mellowing into gold

O'er sapphire chasm, and silvery snow-field cold ;

Fire that o'er-floods the horizon ; beacons borne

From wind-worn peak to storm-swept peak forlorn ;

Clear hallelujahs through heaven's arches rolled.

Never, oh never more these feet shall feel

The firm elastic tissue of upland turf,

Or the crisp edge of the high rocks ; or cling

Where the embattled cliffs beneath them reel

Through cloud-wreaths eddying like the Atlantic surf,

Far, far above the wheeling eagle's wing.





JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

TO NIGHT.

THE MOTHER OF SLEEP AND DEATH

Oh Mother, holiest Mother, Mother Night !

Thou on thy marble throne of ebon hue

Hast still the everlasting stars in view,

The slumbering earth and dusk heavens infinite !

Turn thou those veiled eyes where never light

Shone rudely yet, but dim purpureal blue

Broods in the dawn of moonbeams, on these two

Dread angels folded on thy bosom white :—

Sleep and his twin-born Death, entwined, embraced ;

Mingling soft breath, deep dreams, dark poppied hair ;

Lips pressed to lips, and hands in hands enlaced ;

Thy children and our comforters, the pair

From whom poor men, by earth enslaved, debased,

Find freedom and surmount their life's despair !





JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS
MORGENLIED

AT Mürren let the morning lead thee out
To walk upon the cold and cloven hills ;
To hear the congregated mountains shout
Their pæan of a thousand foaming rills.
Raimented with intolerable light
The snow-peaks stand above thee, row on row
Arising, each a seraph in his might ;
An organ each of varied stop doth blow.
Heaven's azure dome trembles through all her spheres
Feeling that music vibrate ; and the Sun
Raises his tenor as he upward steers ;
And all the glory-coated mists that run
Beneath him in the valley, hear his voice,
And cry unto the dewy fields : Rejoice !





MATHILDE BLIND

THE DEAD

The dead abide with us ! Though stark and cold
Earth seems to grip them, they are with us still :
They have forged our chains of being for good or ill,
And their invisible hands these hands yet hold.
Our perishable bodies are the mould
In which their strong imperishable will—
Mortality's deep yearning to fulfil—
Hath grown incorporate through dim time untold.
Vibrations infinite of life in death,
As a star's travelling light survives its star !
So may we hold our lives, that when we are
The fate of those who then will draw this breath,
They shall not drag us to their judgment bar,
And curse the heritage which we bequeath.





MATHILDE BLIND

THE MOAT

AROUND this lichened home of hoary peace,
Invulnerable in its glassy moat,
A breath of ghostly summers seems to float
And murmur mid the immemorial trees.
The tender slopes, where cattle browse at ease,
Swell softly, like a pigeon's emerald throat :
And, self-oblivious, Time forgets to note
The flight of velvet-footed centuries.

The golden sunshine, netted in the close,
Sleeps indolently by the Yew's slow shade ;
Still, as some relic an old Master made,
The jewelled peacock's rich enamel glows ;
And on yon mossy wall that youthful rose
Blooms like a rose which never means to fade.





ROBERT BUCHANAN

WHEN WE ARE ALL ASLEEP

WHEN He returns, and finds the World so drear—

All sleeping,—young and old, unfair and fair,
Will He stoop down and whisper in each ear,
‘Awaken!’ or for pity’s sake forbear,—

Saying, ‘How shall I meet their frozen stare
Of wonder, and their eyes so full of fear?

How shall I comfort them in their despair,
If they cry out, “Too late! let us sleep here”?’
Perchance He will not wake us up, but when

He sees us look so happy in our rest,
Will murmur, ‘Poor dead women and dead men!
Dire was their doom, and weary was their quest.
Wherefore awake them unto life again?

Let them sleep on untroubled—it is best.’





FREDERIC W. H. MYERS

IAMQUE VALE

DIM in the moon wide-weltering Humber flowed ;
Shone the rare lights on Humber's reaches low ;
And *thou* wert waking, where one lone light glowed,
Whose love made all my bliss, whose woe my woe.
Borne as on Fate's own stream, from thine abode
I with that tide must journey sad and slow ;
In that tall ship on Humber's heaving road
Dream for the night and with the morning go.

Yet thro' this lifelong dimness desolate,
O Love, thy star within me fades not so ;
On that lone light I gaze, and wondering wait,
Since life we lost, if death be ours or no ;
Yea, toward thee moving on the flood of Fate,
Dream for the night, but with the morn will go.





FREDERIC W. H. MYERS
A CHILD OF THE AGE

Oh for a voice that in a single song
Could quiver with the hopes and moan the fears
And speak the speechless secret of the years,
And rise, and sink, and at the last be strong!
Oh for a trumpet-call to stir the throng
Of doubtful fighting-men, whose eyes and ears
Watch till a banner in the East appears,
And the skies ring that have been still so long!
O age of mine, if one could tune for thee
A marching music out of this thy woe!
If we could climb upon a hill and see
Thy gates of promise on the plain below,
And gaze a minute on the bliss to be
And, knowing it, be satisfied to know!





EDWARD DOWDEN

THE SINGER'S PLEA

WHY do I sing? I know not why, my friend ;
The ancient rivers, rivers of renown,
A royal largess to the sea roll down,
And on those liberal highways nations send
Their tributes to the world,—stored corn and wine,
Gold-dust, the wealth of pearls, and orient spar,
And myrrh, and ivory, and cinnabar,
And dyes to make a presence-chamber shine.
But in the woodlands, where the wild-flowers are,
The rivulets, they must have their innocent will,
Who all the summer hours are singing still ;
The birds care for them, and sometimes a star,
And should a tired child rest beside the stream
Sweet memories would slide into his dream.





EDWARD DOWDEN
COACHING, IN SCOTLAND

WHERE have I been this perfect summer day,—
Or *fortnight* is it, since I rose from bed,
Devoured that kippered fish, the oatmeal bread,
And mounted to this box? O bowl away,
Swift stagers, through the dusk; I will not say
'Enough,' ner care where I have been or be,
Nor know one name of hill, or lake, or lea,
Or moor, or glen! Were not the clouds at play
Nameless among the hills, and fair as dreams?
On such a day we must love things, not words,
And memory take or leave them as they are.
On such a day! What unimagined streams
Are in the world, how many haunts of birds,
What fields and flowers,—and what an evening Star!





EDWARD DOWDEN

THE CASTLE

THE tenderest ripple touched and touched the shore ;
The tenderest light was in the western sky ;—
Its one soft phrase, closing reluctantly,
The sea articulated o'er and o'er
To comfort all tired things ; and one might pore,
Till mere oblivion took the heart and eye,
On that slow-fading amber radiancy
Past the long levels of the ocean-floor.
A turn,—the castle fronted me, four-square,
Holding its seaward crag, abrupt, intense
Against the west, an apparition bold
Of naked human will ; I stood aware,
With sea and sky, of powers unowned of sense,
Presences awful, vast, and uncontrolled.





ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

O WOMAN, whose familiar face I hold
In my most sacred thought as in a shrine,
Who in my memories art become divine—
Dost thou remember now those years of old,
When out of all thine own life thou didst mould
This life and breathe thy heart in this of mine,
Winning, for faith in that fair work of thine,
To rest and be in heaven?—Alas, behold!—
Another woman coming after thee
Hath had small pity,—with a wanton kiss
Hath quite consumed my heart and ruined this
The life that was thy work : O Mother, see ;
Thou hast lived all in vain, done all amiss ;
Come down from heaven again, and die with me !





ANDREW LANG

THE ODYSSEY

As one that for a weary space has lain
Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that *Ææan* isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
And only shadows of wan lovers pine,—
As such an one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips, and the large air again,—
So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
And through the music of the languid hours,
They hear like ocean on a western beach
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.





ANDREW LANG

BION

THE wail of Moschus on the mountains crying
 The Muses heard, and loved it long ago;
They heard the hollows of the hills replying,
 They heard the weeping water's overflow;
They winged the sacred strain—the song undying,
 The song that all about the world must go,
When poets for a poet dead are sighing,
 The minstrels for a minstrel friend laid low.

And dirge to dirge that answers, and the weeping
 For Adonais by the summer sea,
The plaints for Lycidas, and Thyrsis (sleeping
 Far from 'the forest ground called Thessaly')—
These hold thy memory, Bion, in their keeping,
 And are but echoes of the moan for thee.





EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

TWILIGHT

A sudden pang contracts the heart of day,
As fades the glory of the sunken sun.
The bats replace the swallows one by one ;
The cries of playing children die away.

Like one in pain, a bell begins to sway ;
A few white oxen, from their labour done,
Pass ghostly through the dusk ; the crone that spun
Beside her door, turns in, and all grows grey.

And still I lie, as I all day have lain,
Here in this garden, thinking of the time
Before the years of helplessness and pain ;

Or playing with the fringes of a rhyme,
Until the yellow moon, amid her train
Of throbbing stars, appears o'er yonder lime.





EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON
SUNKEN GOLD

IN dim green depths rot ingot-laden ships,
While gold doubloons, that from the drowned hand fell,
Lie nestled in the ocean-flower's bell
With Love's old gifts, once kissed by long-drowned lips,
And round some wrought gold cup the sea-grass whips
And hides lost pearls, near pearls still in their shell,
Where sea-weed forests fill each ocean dell,
And seek dim sunlight with their restless tips.
So lie the wasted gifts, the long-lost hopes,
Beneath the now hushed surface of myself,
In lonelier depths than where the diver gropes.
They lie deep, deep ; but I at times behold
In doubtful glimpses, on some reefy shelf,
The gleam of irrecoverable gold.





EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

MIMMA BELLA

'Tis Christmas, and we gaze with downbent head
On something that the post has brought too late
To reach thee, Mimma, through the narrow gate,
From one who did not know that thou art dead ;

A picture book, to play with on thy bed ;
And we, who should have heard thee laugh and prate
So busily, sit here at war with Fate,
And turn the pages silently instead.

O that I knew thee playing 'neath God's eyes,
With the small souls of all the dewy flowers
That strewed thy grave, and died at Autumn's breath ;

Or with the phantom of the doll that lies
Beside thee for Eternity's long hours,
In the dim nursery that men call Death !





EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

MIMMA BELLA

WE search the darkness from the villa's height,
Guessing where cupola and dome and spire
Of Florence lie; till eyes begin to tire
Mid the illusive shadows of the night.

Then suddenly there sparkles into sight
A mighty dome, rimmed round in points of fire,
Its segments outlined as by glowing wire;
And fairy towers follow, fiery bright.

An evanescent city built of stars,
The fair illumination of an hour,
Born of the night, and quenched before the dawn

Like the bright dream on Life's horizon bars
That held us for a moment in its power,
Ere Death's dark curtain over it was drawn.





DAVID M. MAIN

TO A FAVOURITE EVENING RETREAT

O LOVED wild hill-side, that hast been a power
Not less than books, greater than preacher's art,
To heal my wounded spirit, and my heart
Retune to gentle thoughts, that hour on hour
Must languish in the city, like a flower
In wayside dust, while on the vulgar mart
We squander for scant gold our better part
From morn till eve, in frost, and sun, and shower !
My soul breaks into singing as I haste,
Day's labour ended, towards thy sylvan shrine
Of rustling beech, hawthorn, and eglantine ;
And, wandering in thy shade, I dream of thee
As of green pastures 'mid the desert waste,
Wells of sweet water in the bitter sea.





GEORGE JOHN ROMANES

Be it not mine to steal the cultured flower
From any garden of the rich and great,
Nor seek with care, through many a weary hour,
Some novel form of wonder to create.
Enough for me the leafy woods to rove,
And gather simple cups of morning dew,
Or, in the fields and meadows that I love,
Find beauty in their bells of every hue.
Thus round my cottage floats a fragrant air,
And though the rustic plot be humbly laid,
Yet, like the lilies gladly growing there,
I have not toiled, but take what God has made.
My Lord Ambition passed, and smiled in scorn :
I plucked a rose, and, lo ! it had no thorn.





PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON
NOT THOU BUT I

It must have been for one of us, my own,
 To drink this cup and eat this bitter bread.
 Had not my tears upon thy face been shed,
Thy tears had dropped on mine ; if I alone
Did not walk now, thy spirit would have known
 My loneliness ; and did my feet not tread
 This weary path and steep, thy feet had bled
For mine, and thy mouth had for mine made moan :

And so it comforts me, yea, not in vain,
 To think of thine eternity of sleep ;
 To know thine eyes are tearless though mine weep :
And when this cup's last bitterness I drain,
 One thought shall still its primal sweetness keep,—
Thou hadst the peace and I the undying pain.





PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

FIRST AND LAST KISS

Thy lips are quiet, and thine eyes are still ;
Cold, colorless, and sad thy placid face ;
Thy form has only now the statue's grace ;
My words wake not thy voice, nor can they fill
Thine eyes with light. Before fate's mighty will,
Our wills must bow ; yet for a little space,
I sit with thee and death, in this lone place,
And hold thy hands that are so white and chill.

I always loved thee, though thou didst not know ;
But well he knew whose wedded love thou wert :
Now thou art dead, I may raise up the fold
That hides thy face, and, o'er thee bending low,
For the first time and last before we part,
Kiss the curved lips—calm, beautiful, and cold !





PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

A DREAM

HERE, where last night she came,—even she, for whom
I would so gladly live, or lie down dead,—
Came in the likeness of a Dream, and said
Such words as thrilled this desolate ghost-thronged
room,

I sit alone now, in the absolute gloom.

Ah, surely on her breast was leaned my head !

Ah, surely on my mouth her kiss was shed,
And all my life broke into scent and bloom.

Give thanks, heart, for thy rootless flower of bliss ;

Nor think the gods severe, though thus they seem—
Though thou hast much to bear and much to miss—
Whilst thou, through nights and days to be, canst
deem

One thing, and that thing veritably this,
Imperishable,—the memory of a Dream.





PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

MY LIFE

To me my life seems as a haunted house,
The ways and passages whereof are dumb ;
Up whose decaying stair no footsteps come ;
Lo, this the hall hung with sere laurel boughs,
Where long years back came victors to carouse.
But none of all that company went home ;
For scarce their lips had quaffed the bright wine's
foam,
When sudden Death brake dank upon their brows.

Here in this lonely, ruined house I dwell,
While unseen fingers toll the chapel bell ;
Sometimes the arras rustles, and I see
A half-veiled figure through the twilight steal,
Which, when I follow, pauses suddenly
Before the door whereon is set a seal.





EDWARD CRACROFT LEFROY
LIFE

WHITE sails that on the horizon flash and flee,
A moment glinting where the sun has shone ;
White billows for a moment riding free,
Then gulfed in other waves that follow on ;
White birds that hurry past so rapidly,
Albeit no sight more bright to look upon ;
Like you our little life—we are as ye—
A moment sighted, in a moment gone.
Yet not in vain, oh, not in vain, we live,
If we too catch the sunlight in the air,
And signal back the beauty ere we sink
In that dark hollow men call death, and give
To saddened souls that watch us on the brink
A gleam of glory, transient but fair.





EDWARD CRACROFT LEFROY
ON THE BEACH IN NOVEMBER

My heart's Ideal, that somewhere out of sight
Art beautiful and gracious and alone,—
Haply, where blue Saronic waves are blown
On shores that keep some touch of old delight,—
How welcome is thy memory, and how bright,
To one who watches over leagues of stone
These chilly northern waters creep and moan
From weary morning unto weary night.
O Shade-form, lovelier than the living crowd,
So kind to votaries, yet thyself unvoiced,
So free to human fancies, fancy-free,
My vagrant thought goes out to thee, to thee,
As wandering lonelier than the Poet's cloud,
I listen to the wash of this dull sea.





EDWARD CRACROFT LEFROY
IN THE CLOISTERS
WINCHESTER COLLEGE

I WALKED to-day where Past and Present meet,
In that grey cloister eloquent of years,
Which ever groweth old, yet ever hears
The same glad echo of unaging feet.
Only from brass and stone some quaint conceit,
The monument of long-forgotten tears,
Whispers of vanished lives, of spent careers,
And hearts that, beating once, have ceased to beat.
And as I walked, I heard the boys who played
Beyond the quiet precinct, and I said—
‘How broad the gulf which delving Time has made
Between those happy living and these dead.’
And, lo, I spied a grave new-garlanded,
And on the wall a boyish face that prayed.





EDWARD CRACROFT LEFROY
A CRICKET BOWLER

Two minutes' rest till the next man goes in !
The tired arms lie with every sinew slack
On the mown grass. Unbent the supple back,
And elbows apt to make the leather spin
Up the slow bat and round the unwary shin,—
In knavish hands a most unkindly knack ;
But no guile shelters under this boy's black
Crisp hair, frank eyes, and honest English skin.
Two minutes only. Conscious of a name,
The new man plants his weapon with profound
Long-practised skill that no mere trick may scare.
Not loth, the rested lad resumes the game :
The flung ball takes one madding tortuous bound,
And the mid-stump three somersaults in air.





FRANCIS THOMPSON

AD AMICAM. I

DEAR Dove, that bear'st to my sole-labouring ark
The olive-branch of so long wishèd rest,
When the white solace glimmers through my dark
Of nearing wings, what comfort in my breast!
Oh, may that doubted day not come, not come,
When you shall fail, my heavenly messenger,
And drift into the distance and the doom
Of all my impermissible things that were!
Rather than so, now make the sad farewell,
Which yet may be with not too-painèd pain
Lest I again the acquainted tale should tell
Of sharpest loss that pays for shortest gain.
Ah, if my heart should hear no white wings thrill
Against its waiting window, open still'





FRANCIS THOMPSON

AD AMICAM. II

WHEN from the blossoms of the noisy day
Unto the hive of sleep and hushèd gloom
Throng the dim-wingèd dreams—what dreams are they
That with the wildest honey hover home?
Oh, they that have from many thousand thoughts
Stolen the strange sweet of ever-blossomy you,
A thousand fancies in fair-coloured knots
Which you are inexhausted meadow to.
Ah, what sharp heathery honey, quick with pain,
Do they bring home! It holds the night awake
To hear their lovely murmur in my brain;
And Sleep's wings have a trouble for your sake.
Day and you dawn together: for, at end,
With the first light breaks the first thought—
'My friend!'





FRANCIS THOMPSON
DESIDERIUM INDESIDERATUM

O GAIN that lurk'st ungainèd in all gain !
O love we just fall short of in all love !
O height that in all heights art still above !
O beauty that dost leave all beauty pain !
Thou unpossessed that mak'st possession vain,
See these strained arms which fright the simple air,
And say what ultimate fairness holds thee, Fair !
They girdle Heaven, and girdle Heaven in vain ;
They shut, and lo ! but shut in their unrest.
Thereat a voice in me that voiceless was :—
' Whom seekest thou through the unmargèd arcane,
And not discern'st to thine own bosom prest ?'
I looked. My claspèd arms athwart my breast
Framed the august embraces of the Cross.





ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON
ARMISTICE

FROM the broad summit of the furrowed wold
The oxen, resting, gaze with quiet eyes—
Through the swart shining hide's obscurities
Shows, sharply hewn, the gaunt frame's massive mould,
Wide spread the horns in branching outlines bold—
Solemn they stand beneath the brooding skies,
Impassive, grave, as guardian deities
Carved on some stone sarcophagus of old.

Proud 'neath the yoke bends every stately head ;
What tho' the burden drag, the goad-sting gall,
Rest is Earth's recompense for each and all,
Ours, as for these mute thralls of trailing tread,
Emblems of labour immemorial,
The dignity of toil incarnated.





ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON
ILLUSIONS

THEY say our best illusions soonest fly—
Bright, many-tinted birds on rainbow wing,
Adown the dim dawn-valleys vanishing
Long ere our noon be white upon the sky :
Nay, never so, in sooth ; ourselves go by,
Leaving the sun that shines, the birds that sing,
The hazy, golden glammers of the Spring,
The summer dawning's clear obscurity.

O woven sorceries of sun and shade !
O bare brown Downs by grasslands glad and green !
Deep, haunted woods, with shadows thick between ;
Young leaves, with every year newborn, remade ;
Fair are ye still, and fair have ever been—
While we, ephemera, but fail and fade.





ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON
TO-DAY

CLASP close my hand ; this little space is ours,
This safe green shore between two bitter seas,
A narrow meadow-land of love and ease,
Made musical with birds and fair with flowers.
For all the fragrance of the rose-hung bowers,
For all the shelter of the dusky trees,
We thank thee, Fortune ! Yea, upon our knees
With tears we praise thee for these perfect hours.

Look not where Yesterday's dull current laves
The misty sea-board of our landing-place—
Clasp close my hand, and turn to me thy face,
Before we tempt To-morrow's tossing waves :
Forget, in this dear moment's certain grace,
That Time and Fate press on—and hold us slaves.





ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON
TO-NIGHT

ALAS ! my heart shrinks chill before To-night ;
The birds keep silence now ; the air is grey
And salt with leaping foam of Yesterday,
Lashed into fury with the shrill wind's flight.
To-day hath shrunk too narrow for delight :
To-morrow's billows raven for their prey ;
Through gathering dusk, low-gleaming on its way,
The rolling tide advances, wild and white.

Thy mournful face is fading from my sight,
Though still thy hand clings steadfastly in mine ;
The dawn draws near to bid us both resign
Our storm-worn shallop to the tide-wave's might :
Yet this, a little while, was mine and thine—
One green vine-garland plucked in Fate's despite.





ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON
HEREAFTER

SHALL we not weary in the windless days
Hereafter, for the murmur of the sea,
The cool salt air across some grassy lea?
Shall we not go bewildered through a maze
Of stately streets with glittering gems ablaze,
Forlorn amid the pearl and ivory,
Straining our eyes beyond the bourne to see
Phantoms from out Life's dear, forsaken ways?
Give us again the crazy clay-built nest,
Summer, and soft unseasonable spring,
Our flowers to pluck, our broken songs to sing,
Our fairy gold of evening in the West;
Still to the land we love our longings cling,
The sweet, vain world of turmoil and unrest.





WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI

DEMOCRACY DOWNTRODDEN

(1849)

How long, O Lord?—The voice is sounding still :
 Not only heard beneath the altar-stone,
 Not heard of John Evangelist alone
In Patmos. It doth cry aloud and will
Between the earth's end and earth's end, until
 The day of the great reckoning—bone for bone,
 And blood for righteous blood, and groan for groan :
Then shall it cease on the air with a sudden thrill ;
Not slowly growing fainter if the rod
 Strikes here or there amid the evil throng,
 Or one oppressor's hand is stayed and numbs ;
 Not till the vengeance that is coming comes.
For shall all hear the voice excepting God,
 Or God not listen, hearing?—Lord, how long?





THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

COLERIDGE

I SEE thee pine like her in golden story

Who, in her prison, woke and saw, one day,

The gates thrown open—saw the sunbeams play,
With only a web 'tween her and summer's glory ;

Who, when that web—so frail, so transitory,

It broke before her breath—had fallen away,

Saw other webs and others rise for aye

Which kept her prisoned till her hair was hoary.

Those songs half-sung that yet were all-divine—

That woke Romance, the queen, to reign afresh—

Had been but preludes from that lyre of thine,

Could thy rare spirit's wings have pierced the mesh

Spun by the wizard who compels the flesh,

But lets the poet see how heav'n can shine.





THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

A TALK ON WATERLOO BRIDGE THE LAST SIGHT OF GEORGE BORROW

WE talked of 'Children of the Open Air,'
Who once on hill and valley lived aloof,
Loving the sun, the wind, the sweet reproof
Of storms, and all that makes the fair earth fair,
Till, on a day, across the mystic bar
Of moonrise, came the 'Children of the Roof,'
Who find no balm 'neath evening's rosiest woof,
Nor dews of peace beneath the Morning Star.

We looked o'er London, where men wither and choke,
Roofed in, poor souls, renouncing stars and skies,
And lore of woods and wild wind prophecies,
Yea, every voice that to their fathers spoke:
And sweet it seemed to die ere bricks and smoke
Leave never a meadow outside Paradise.





THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

A DREAM

BENEATH the loveliest dream there coils a fear :
Last night came she whose eyes are memories now ;
Her far-off gaze seemed all forgetful how
Love dimmed them once, so calm they shone and clear.
'Sorrow,' I said, 'has made me old, my dear ;
'Tis I, indeed, but grief can change the brow :
Beneath *my* load a seraph's neck might bow,
Vigils like mine would blanch an angel's hair.'
Oh, then I saw, I saw the sweet lips move !
I saw the love-mists thickening in her eyes.—
I heard a sound as if a murmuring dove
Felt lonely in the dells of Paradise ;
But when upon my neck she fell, my love,
Her hair smelt sweet of whin and woodland spice.





THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON
NATURA MALIGNA

THE Lady of the Hills with crimes untold
Followed my feet with azure eyes of prey ;
By glacier-brink she stood—by cataract-spray—
When mists were dire, or avalanche-echoes rolled.
At night she glimmered in the death-wind cold,
And if a footprint shone at break of day,
My flesh would quail, but straight my soul would say :
“ ’Tis hers whose hand God’s mightier hand doth hold.”
I trod her snow-bridge, for the moon was bright,
Her icicle-arch across the sheer crevasse,
When lo, she stood ! . . . God made her let me pass,
Then felled the bridge ! . . . Oh, there in sallow light,
There down the chasm, I saw her cruel, white,
And all my wondrous days as in a glass.





THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

NATURA BENIGNA

WHAT power is this ? what witchery wins my feet
To peaks so sheer they scorn the cloaking snow,
All silent as the emerald gulfs below,
Down whose ice-walls the wings of twilight beat ?
What thrill of earth and heaven—most wild, most
sweet—

What answering pulse that all the senses know,
Comes leaping from the ruddy eastern glow
Where, far away, the skies and mountains meet ?
Mother, 'tis I reborn : I know thee well :
That throb I know and all its prophecies,
O Mother and Queen, beneath the olden spell
Of silence, gazing from thy hills and skies !
Dumb Mother, struggling with the years to tell
The secret at thy heart through helpless eyes.





THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON
THE WOOD-HAUNTER'S DREAM

THE wild things loved me, but a wood-sprite said :
‘Though meads are sweet when flowers at morn
uncurl,

And woods are sweet with nightingale and merle,
Where are the dreams that flushed thy childish bed ?
The Spirit of the Rainbow thou wouldst wed !’

I rose, I found her—found a rain-drenched girl
Whose eyes of azure and limbs like roseate pearl
Coloured the rain above her golden head.

But when I stood by that sweet vision's side,
I saw no more the Rainbow's lovely stains ;
To her by whom the glowing heavens were dyed
The sun showed naught but dripping woods and
plains :

‘God gives the world the Rainbow, her the rains,’
The wood-sprite laughed : ‘our seeker finds a bride.’





WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

To-day, all day, I rode upon the down,
With hounds and horsemen, a brave company.
On this side in its glory lay the sea,
On that the Sussex weald, a sea of brown.
The wind was light, and brightly the sun shone.
And still we galloped on from gorse to gorse.
And once, when checked, a thrush sang, and my horse
Pricked his quick ears as to a sound unknown.
I knew the Spring was come. I knew it even
Better than all by this, that through my chase
In bush and stone and hill and sea and heaven
I seemed to see and follow still your face.
Your face my quarry was. For it I rode,
My horse a thing of wings, myself a god.





WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

FAREWELL TO JULIET

FAREWELL, then. It is finished. I forego
With this all right in you, even that of tears.
If I have spoken hardly, it will show
How much I loved you. With you disappears
A glory, a romance of many years.
What you may be henceforth I will not know.
The phantom of your presence on my fears
Is impotent at length for weal or woe.
Your past, your present, all alike must fade
In a new land of dreams, where love is not.
Then kiss me and farewell. The choice is made,
And we shall live to see the past forgot,
If not forgiven. See, I came to curse,
Yet stay to bless. I know not which is worse.





WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT
ON THE SHORTNESS OF TIME

If I could live without the thought of Death,
Forgetful of Time's waste, the soul's decay,
I would not ask for other joy than breath
With light and sound of birds and the sun's ray.
I could sit on untroubled day by day
Watching the grass grow, and the wild flowers range
From blue to yellow and from red to grey
In natural sequence as the seasons change.
I could afford to wait, but for the hurt
Of this dull tick of time which chides my ear.
But now I dare not sit with loins ungirt
And staff unlifted, for Death stands too near.
I must be up and doing—ay, each minute.
The grave gives time for rest when we are in it.





WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

THE SUBLIME

To stand upon a windy pinnacle,
Beneath the infinite blue of the blue noon,
And underfoot a valley terrible
As that dim gulf, where sense and being swoon
When the soul parts ; a giant valley strewn
With giant rocks ; asleep, and vast, and still,
And far away. The torrent, which has hewn
His pathway through the entrails of the hill,
Now crawls along the bottom and anon
Lifts up his voice, a muffled tremulous roar,
Borne on the wind an instant, and then gone
Back to the caverns of the middle air ;
A voice as of a nation overthrown
With beat of drums, when hosts have marched to war.





WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

THE SAME CONTINUED

CLUTCHING the brink with hands and feet and knees,
With trembling heart, and eyes grown strangely dim,
A part thyself and parcel of the frieze
Of that colossal temple raised to Time,
To gaze on horror, till, as in a crime,
Thou and the rocks become accomplices.
There is no voice, no life, 'twixt thee and them.
No life ! Yet, look, far down upon the breeze
Something has passed across the bosom bare
Of the red rocks, a leaf, a shape, a shade.
A living shadow ! Ay, above thee there,
Weaving majestic circles overhead,
Others are watching.—This is the sublime
To be alone, with eagles in the air.





AUSTIN DOBSON

DON QUIXOTE

BEHIND thy pasteboard, on thy battered hack,
Thy lean cheek striped with plaster to and fro,
Thy long spear levelled at the unseen foe,
And doubtful Sancho trudging at thy back,
Thou wert a figure strange enough, good lack !
To make wiseacredom, both high and low,
Rub purblind eyes, and (having watched thee go)
Dispatch its Dogberrys upon thy track :
Alas ! poor Knight ! Alas ! poor soul possest !
Yet would to-day, when Courtesy grows chill,
And life's fine loyalties are turned to jest,
Some fire of thine might burn within us still !
Ah, would but one might lay his lance in rest
And charge in earnest—were it but a mill !





BERTRAM DOBELL

THE PARADOX OF CREATION

A SPECK within a boundless Universe

His home, and he an atom on that speck,
The slave of tyrant forces that coerce

His will, and all his aspirations check ;
And yet a being made to dominate

The world of sense by mind's controlling power :
Spoiled favourite at once and sport of fate,

Time's fool indeed, yet its consummate flower !
Alone did Nature to his soul impart

A spark of her divinest energy,
Power to create the wondrous world of art,

And gave, in giving thought, her master key :
So great and yet so little ! blessed and cursed—
Nature's most noble offspring—yet her worst !





JOHN PAYNE

AD DANTEM

To thee, my master, thee, my shining one,
Whose solitary face, immovable,
Burning athwart the midmost glooms of Hell,
Calls up stern shadows of the things undone,—
To thee, immortal, shining like the sun
In the blue heart of Heaven's clearest bell,
Circled with radiances ineffable,—
These pale sad flowers I bring,—how hardly won
From this grey night of modern lovelessness,
How hardly and how wearily God knows !
These at thy feet I lay, whose hues confess
Thy mighty shade, so haply they may shine
With some pale reflex of that light divine
Which ripples round thine own supernal rose.





JOHN PAYNE

THE SANCTUARY LAMPS

SEVEN lamps of gold the spirit's sanctuary
Illume, Hope, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude,
Faith, Prudence, Charity, which, when imbued
With oil of Grace, burn bright and clear and free
And with their shining over land and sea,
Startle the fiends of fancies fond and lewd
And hold thy fane unharrowed of their feud,
O soul, for thy Lord's coming unto thee.
—Who this Lord is, none knoweth. This one saith,
His name is Life, and that, his name is Death :
Some say he bears a palm and some a sword.
This only know we ; be he who he will,
My soul, thy lamps behoveth thee hold still
Bright-burning, 'gainst the coming of thy Lord.





JOHN PAYNE

THE LAST OF THE GODS

OF all the Gods, for Love my heart is sore,
For Love, that was so frank and fair a thing,
That had so vague and sweet a voice to sing
To our tired sense. Since to the unknown shore,
With all his glammers, he is gone before,
How shall the world again be glad in Spring,
How shall the earth again with blossoming
Be clad or have delight of Summer more ?
And yet, and yet, sad heart, be comforted :
Love, of a truth, is not for ever dead ;
He sleepeth but for weariness of woe
And sheer despite of this our world of show
And yet will lift again his lovesome head
And take again his arrows and his bow.





JOHN PAYNE
THE HONEYSUCKLE

THE honeysuckle clammers everywhere
And in the quickset hedges left and right
Runs, with its scrolls of gold and red and white
Broidering the rugged thorn, which, now though bare,
But yesterday with fragrant bloom was fair.
Like some sweet thought, too vagrant and too slight
To seize, too vague to follow in its flight,
Its breath of cream and almonds brims the air.
—With soft caressing clasp it seems the thorn
To solace for its loss of flower and scent,
Its bygone blossom-glories of the May,
As some kind humble love the soul forlorn
Heals of the heartbreak of a desolate day
And the repine of Passion's ravishment.





JOHN PAYNE
ULTIMA RATIO

FOR this I thank the Fates, that else have been
Stepmothers frowning-faced to me and stern,
That they have granted me my bread to earn
On freeman-fashion, hands and spirit clean
Vouchsafing me from sordid strife and mean
To hold and base compliances to spurn,
That stain the soul, and fellowships that burn
Their brand indelible on mind and mien.
So, back on life, now drawing to its goal,
'Spite darksome days and sorrow-stricken nights,
Content I look, that never have forsaid
My faith, but for the flowerage of my soul
Have forced the unwilling world to yield me bread,
If scanty, sweet, being gotten on the heights.





JOHN PAYNE

THE END OF THE ÆON

THE end of the old order draweth nigh ;
The air is thick with signs of coming change ;
Forebodings vague through all men's fancies range,
Dim clouds of doubt, that overcast the sky,
And mists of fear, that darken every eye.
In hut and hall, in town and tower and grange,
Men's souls are sick with visions void and strange,
Delirious dreams of those about to die.
No faith there is but is a phantom grown
Of its old self ; the Gods by doubt and Fate
Are frozen back to shapes of senseless stone.
All eyes are fixed upon the Future's gate,
For that which is to be, and all things wait
To hail the coming of the Gods unknown.





SAMUEL WADDINGTON

AMIEL

LONE wanderer 'mid the loftiest heights of Thought,
Tired watcher for the Dawn that brings the Light,
Whose spirit, in rapt vision, ever sought
To view the shadowy realm beyond our sight,
The powers eternal and the Infinite,—
Say, was thy quest in vain? Was it for nought
To garner truth thou labour'dst thro' the night,
Thy life unfruitful and thy work unwrought?

Nay, not in vain,—if Hope, and Joy, and Love,
Together watched thy journey on the way;
Oh, not in vain,—if voices from above,
Calling thee onward, led thee day by day:
His life alone is vain who never strove,—
Not theirs who for the Truth still watch and pray.





SAMUEL WADDINGTON

IN THE WOODS OF SWEET CHESTNUT

WHERE still Varenna wears her cypress-crown
At eve amid the chestnut-woods I lay ;
The twilight lingered with the little town,
Then round by Cadenabbia stole away :
The dim woods darkened at the set of day ;
Yet where the forest-shadows lowering frown
Like fairies with their lamps the fire-flies stray,
Lighting their lanterns as the sun goes down.

There in the dusk, in silence resting there,
Was it a Spirit-Voice I heard declare—
Some Pixy of the Woods that stopped to say—
'Eternal are the skies and infinite ;
Eternal are the stars that shine so bright ;
But here a little while the fire-flies play.'





SAMUEL WADDINGTON

HUMAN

ACROSS the trackless skies thou may'st not wander ;
Thou may'st not tread the infinite beyond ;
In peace possess thy soul, reflect and ponder,
Full brief thy gaze, tho' Nature's magic wand
Light up an universe, and bid thee wonder !
What though beyond the sea there may be land
Where grows the vine, where blooms the oleander,
Where verdure gleams amid the desert sand,—
Yet not for thee those foreign, fertile spaces,
Remote, unseen, unknown, though known to be !
Thy home is here, and here belovèd faces
Make sweet and fair the home and heart of thee ;
Thy home is here, and here thy heart embraces
Life's joy and hope, love, truth, and liberty !





SAMUEL WADDINGTON

'FROM NIGHT TO NIGHT'

From night to night, through circling darkness whirled,
Day dawns, and wanes, and still leaves, as before,
The shifting tides and the eternal shore
Sources of life, and forces of the world,
Unseen, unknown, in folds of mystery furled,
Unseen, unknown, remain for evermore :—
To heaven-hid heights man's questioning soul would
soar,
Yet falls from darkness unto darkness hurled !
Angels of light, ye spirits of the air,
Peopling of yore the dreamland of our youth,
Ye who once led us through those scenes so fair,
Lead now, and leave us near the realm of Truth :
Lo, if in dreams some truths we chanced to see,
Now in the truth some dreams may haply be.





SAMUEL WADDINGTON

SOUL AND BODY

WHERE wert thou, Soul, ere yet my body born
Became thy dwelling-place? Didst thou on earth,
Or in the clouds, await this body's birth?
Or by what chance upon that winter's morn
Didst thou this body find, a babe forlorn?
Didst thou in sorrow enter, or in mirth?
Or for a jest, perchance, to try its worth
Thou tookest flesh, ne'er from it to be torn?

Nay, Soul, I will not mock thee; well I know
Thou wert not on the earth, nor in the sky;
For with my body's growth thou too didst grow;
But with that body's death wilt thou too die?
I know not, and thou canst not tell me, so
In doubt we'll go together—thou and I.





SAMUEL WADDINGTON
THE DEARTH OF SONG

THE darkness deepens on the dim-lit shore ;
The mountains hide their glory in the shade ;
The notes we loved are mute, and nevermore
Pipe the glad voices thro' the forest glade :
The pall of Silence on the earth is laid ;
Nor longer do we hear the Songs of yore ;
We list no carolling of man or maid :
Yet shall some future day our joy restore.

Soon, soon the Night shall pass, and on the wing
The lark soar upward thro' the golden air ;
Soon shall the throstle and the mavis sing,
Warbling their love-notes from each leafy lair
And while amid the pines the light winds sigh,
Spirit of Poesy ! thou shalt not die.





ERNEST MYERS

THE BANQUET

Now, as when sometime with high festival
A conquering king new realms inaugurates,
The souls of men go up within the gates
Of their new-made mysterious palace-hall.
And on their ears in bursts of triumph fall
Marches of mighty music, while below,
In carven cups with far-sought gems aglow,
And lamped by shapes of splendour on the wall,
The new wine of Man's kingdom flashes free.
Yet some among the wonders wondering there
Sit desolate, and shivering inwardly
Lack yet some love to make the strange thing fair;
Yea, to their sad selves rather seem to be
Sheep from the sheepfold strayed they know not where.





ERNEST MYERS

MILTON

He left the upland lawns and serene air
Wherefrom his soul her noble nurture drew,
And reared his helm among the unquiet crew
Battling beneath ; the morning radiance rare
Of his young brow amid the tumult there
Grew grim with sulphurous dust and sanguine dew ;
Yet through all soilure they who marked him knew
The sign of his life's dayspring, calm and fair.
But when peace came, peace fouler far than war,
And mirth more dissonant than battle's tone,
He, with a scornful sigh of that clear soul,
Back to his mountain clomb, now bleak and frore,
And with the awful Night he dwelt alone,
In darkness, listening to the thunder's roll.





ROBERT BRIDGES

WHILE yet we wait for spring, and from the dry
And blackening east that so embitters March,
Well-housed must watch grey fields and meadows parch,
And driven dust and withering snowflake fly ;
Already in glimpses of the tarnish'd sky
The sun is warm and beckons to the larch,
And where the covert hazels interarch
Their tassell'd twigs, fair beds of primrose lie.

Beneath the crisp and wintry carpet hid
A million buds but stay their blossoming ;
And trustful birds have built their nests amid
The shuddering boughs, and only wait to sing
Till one soft shower from the south shall bid,
And hither tempt the pilgrim steps of spring.





ROBERT BRIDGES

WHERE San Miniato's convent from the sun
At forenoon overlooks the city of flowers
I sat, and gazing on her domes and towers
Call'd up her famous children one by one :
And three who all the rest had far outdone,
Mild Giotto first, who stole the morning hours,
I saw, and god-like Buonarroti's powers,
And Dante, gravest poet, her much-wrong'd son.

Is all this glory, I said, another's praise ?
Are these heroic triumphs things of old,
And do I dead upon the living gaze ?
Or rather doth the mind, that can behold
The wondrous beauty of the works and days,
Create the image that her thoughts enfold ?





ROBERT BRIDGES

REJOICE, ye dead, where'er your spirits dwell,
Rejoice that yet on earth your fame is bright ;
And that your names, remember'd day and night,
Live on the lips of those that love you well.
'Tis ye that conquer'd have the powers of hell,
Each with the special grace of your delight :
Ye are the world's creators, and thro' might
Of everlasting love ye did excel.

Now ye are starry names, above the storm
And war of Time and nature's endless wrong
Ye flit, in pictured truth and peaceful form,
Wing'd with bright music and melodious song,—
The flaming flowers of heaven, making May-dance
In dear Imagination's rich pleasance.





ROBERT BRIDGES

I CARE not if I live, tho' life and breath
Have never been to me so dear and sweet.
I care not if I die, for I could meet—
Being so happy—happily my death.
I care not if I love; to-day she saith
She loveth, and love's history is complete.
Nor care I if she love me; at her feet
My spirit bows entranced and worshipping.

I have no care for what was most my care,
But all around me see fresh beauty born,
And common sights grown lovelier than they were :
I dream of love, and in the light of morn
Tremble, beholding all things very fair
And strong with strength that puts my strength to
scorn.





ROBERT BRIDGES

IN autumn moonlight, when the white air wan
Is fragrant in the wake of summer hence,
'Tis sweet to sit entranced, and muse thereon
In melancholy and godlike indolence :

When the proud spirit, lull'd by mortal prime
To fond pretence of immortality,
Vieweth all moments from the birth of time,
All things whate'er have been or yet shall be.

And like the garden, where the year is spent,
The ruin of old life is full of yearning,
Mingling poetic rapture of lament
With flowers and sunshine of spring's sure returning ;

Only in visions of the white air wan
By godlike fancy seized and dwelt upon.





ROBERT BRIDGES

YE blessed saints, that now in heaven enjoy
The purchase of those tears, the world's disdain,
Doth Love still with his war your peace annoy,
Or hath Death freed you from his ancient pain?

Have ye no springtide, and no burst of May
In flowers and leafy trees, when solemn night
Pants with love-music, and the holy day
Breaks on the ear with songs of heavenly light?

What make ye and what strive for? keep ye thought
Of us, or in new excellence divine
Is old forgot? or do ye count for nought
What the Greek did and what the Florentine?

We keep your memories well: O in your store
Live not our best joys treasured evermore?





EDMUND GOSSE

EPITHALAMIUM

HIGH in the organ-loft, with liliated hair,
Love plied the pedals with a snowy foot,
Pouring forth music like the scent of fruit,
And stirring all the incense-laden air ;
We knelt before the altar's gold rail, where
The priest stood robed, with chalice and palm-shoot,
With music-men, who bore citole and lute,
Behind us, and the attendant virgins fair ;
And so our red aurora flashed to gold,
Our dawn to sudden sun, and all the while
The high-voiced children trebled clear and cold,
The censer-boys went singing down the aisle,
And far above, with fingers strong and sure,
Love closed our lives' triumphant overture.





EDMUND GOSSE
THE FEAR OF DEATH

LAST night I woke and found between us drawn,—
Between us, where no mortal fear may creep,—
The vision of Death dividing us in sleep ;
And suddenly I thought, Ere light shall dawn
Some day,—the substance, not the shadow, of Death
Shall cleave us like a sword. The vision passed,
But all its new-born horror held me fast,
And till day broke I listened for your breath.
Some day to wake, and find that coloured skies,
And pipings in the woods, and petals wet,
Are things for aching memory to forget ;
And that your living hands and mouth and eyes
Are part of all the world's old histories !—
Dear God ! a little longer, ah not yet !





EDMUND GOSSE

THE PIPE-PLAYER

Cool, and palm-shaded from the torrid heat,
The young brown tenor puts his singing by,
And sets the twin pipe to his lips to try
Some air of bulrush-glooms where lovers meet ;
O swart musician, time and fame are fleet,
Brief all delight, and youth's feet fain to fly !
Pipe on in peace ! To-morrow must we die ?
What matter, if our life to-day be sweet !
Soon, soon, the silver paper-reeds that sigh
Along the Sacred River will repeat
The echo of the dark-stoled bearers' feet,
Who carry you, with wailing, where must lie
Your swathed and withered body, by-and-by,
In perfumed darkness with the grains of wheat.





WILLIAM LEONARD COURTNEY
DEATH

GRIEF, and the ache of things that pass and fade,
The stately pomp, the pall, the open grave,
These and the solemn thoughts which cannot save
Our eyes from tears, nor make us less afraid
Of that dread mystery which God has made :—
How many thousand thousand men who wave
Speechless farewells, with hearts forlornly brave,
Know well the mockery of Death's parade !

This cannot help us to transgress the bounds,
Nor give us wings to overpass the steep
Ramparts of Heaven which God's angels keep :
Wide is the ' great gulf fixed ' : for us the mounds
Of fresh-turned earth ; above, sweet peace surrounds
The painless patience of eternal sleep.





EDMOND HOLMES

Nor in the strength of duty but of love,
Not as Fate wills but as their comrades call,
The stars of midnight on their orbits move,
Each drawn to each, and all afire for all.
Blind that we are, we think they blindly sweep
Through voids of darkness, without guide or aim :
Yet all the Universe, from deep to deep,
Flashes and glows with love's ethereal flame.
Deaf that we are, we think that silence reigns
When midnight sends no message to our ears :
Yet all Creation echoes to the strains
Sung, at love's bidding, by the gliding spheres.
Silent and dark we deem it,—yet the night
Rings with love's music, quivers with love's light.



EDMOND HOLMES

MEMORIES

O LAND of solitude, can I forget
How I have watched a sudden sheet of spray
Leap up triumphant on a stormy day
Above the cliffs, when wintry waves beset
A headland of despair—how I have met
Far inland—wanderers from their native home—
The flying feathers of your ocean foam,
And felt the rushing west wind, salt and wet
With driven mist:—but I remember most
How all one night, O melancholy land,
By lone Liscannor bay I could not sleep
For listening to the voices of the deep—
The tramlings of a never-ending host
Along the desolation of the sand.





EDMOND HOLMES

FROM SHANNON TO SEA

THE Shannon bore me to thy bosom wide :
 I wandered with it on its winding way
 By fields of yellow corn and new-mown hay,
And far blue hills that rose on either side,
And low dark woods that fringed the ebbing tide :
 And ever as its waters neared the west,
 Out of the slumber of its broadening breast
Faint momentary ripples rose and died ;—
And rose again before the breeze and grew
 To wavelets dancing in the noonday light,
And these were changed to waves of ocean blue,
 And creek and headland faded from the sight,
And oh ! at last—at last I floated free
On the long rollers of the open sea.





HARDWICK DRUMMOND RAWNSLEY
THE OLD PARISH CHURCH, WHITBY

WE climbed the steep where headless Edwin lies—
The king who struck for Christ, and striking fell ;
Beyond the harbour tolled the beacon bell ;
Saint Mary's peal sent down her glad replies ;
So entered we the Church : white galleries,
Cross-stanchions, frequent stairs, dissembled well
A ship's mid-hold,—we almost felt the swell
Beneath, and caught o'erhead the sailors' cries.

But as we heard the congregational sound,
And reasonable voice of common prayer
And common praise, new wind was in our sails—
Heart called to heart, beyond the horizon's bound
With Christ we steered, through angel-haunted air,
A ship that meets all storms, rides out all gales.





HARDWICK DRUMMOND RAWNSLEY
SWITZERLAND

LAND of undying Winter, endless Spring,
—For twice behind the scythe your valleys shine ;
Land of the broad-leaved chestnut and the pine,
Where all the flowers their gayest garlands fling
Before the feet of Summer ; where bells ring
An echo to the music of the kine ;
Land doubly flowing with milk and mellow wine,
Milk of pure kindness, wine of welcoming—
To you I come, worn out with petty care,
Come, for the cuckoo called me ; let blue floods
And your white-blossoming valleys close me round,
And give me leave with simple faith to share
The solace of your mountain solitudes,
And walk with Freedom on her native ground.



THOMAS HERBERT WARREN

MAY-DAY ON MAGDALEN TOWER

MORN of the year, of day and May the prime!
How fitly do we scale the steep dark stair
Into the brightness of the matin air
To praise with chanted hymn and echoing chime,
Dear Lord of Light, thy lowlihead sublime
That stooped erewhile our life's frail weed to wear!
Sun, cloud, and hill, all things Thou framest so fair,
With us are glad and gay, greeting the time.

The college of the lily leaves her sleep;
The gray tower rocks and trembles into sound,
Dawn-smitten Memnon of a happier hour;
Through faint-hued fields the silver waters creep;
Day grows, birds pipe, and robed anew and crowned,
Green Spring trips forth to set the world aflower.





MARGARET L. WOODS

GENIUS LOCI

PEACE, Shepherd, peace ! What boots it singing on ?
 Since long ago grace-giving Phœbus died,
 And all the train that loved the stream-bright side
Of the poetic mount with him are gone
Beyond the shores of Styx and Acheron,
 In unexplorèd realms of night to hide.
 The clouds that strew their shadows far and wide
Are all of Heaven that visits Helicon.

Yet here, where never muse or god did haunt,
 Still may some nameless power of Nature stray,
Pleased with the reedy stream's continual chant
 And purple pomp of these broad fields in May.
The shepherds meet him where he herds the kine,
And careless pass him by whose is the gift divine.





A. MARY F. ROBINSON

SOLDIERS PASSING

ALONG the planetree-dappled pearly street,
Full flooded with the gay Parisian light,
I watch the people gather, left and right,
Far off I hear the clarion shrilling sweet ;

Nearer and nearer comes the tramp of feet ;
And, while the soldiers still are out of sight,
Over the crowd the wave of one delight
Breaks, and transfigures all the dusty heat.

So have I seen the western Alps turn rose
When the reflection of the rising sun
Irradiates all their peaks and woods and snows.

Even so this various nation blends in one
As down the street the sacred banner goes,
And every Frenchman feels himself its son !





A. MARY F. ROBINSON

THE VISION

SOMETIMES when I sit musing all alone
The sick diversity of human things,
Into my soul, I know not how, there springs
The vision of a world unlike our own.

O stable Zion, perfect, endless, one,
Why hauntest thou a soul that hath no wings?
I look on thee as men on mirage springs,
Knowing the desert bears but sand and stone.

Yet as a passing mirror in the street
Flashes a glimpse of gardens out of range
Through some poor sick-room open to the heat,
So, in a world of doubt and death and change,
The vision of eternity is sweet,
The vision of eternity is strange.





WILLIAM WATSON

THE FRONTIER

At the hushed brink of twilight,—when, as though
Some solemn journeying phantom paused to lay
An ominous finger on the awestruck day,
Earth holds her breath till that great presence go,—
A moment comes of visionary glow,
Pendulous 'twixt the gold hour and the grey,
Lovelier than these, more eloquent than they
Of memory, foresight, and life's ebb and flow.

So have I known, in some fair woman's face,
While viewless yet was Time's more gross imprint,
The first, faint, hesitant, elusive hint
Of that invasion of the vandal years
Seem deeper beauty than youth's cloudless grace,
Wake subtler dreams, and touch me nigh to tears.





WILLIAM WATSON

TO ONE WHO HAD WRITTEN IN DERISION OF THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

DISMISS not so, with light hard phrase and cold,
Ev'n if it be but fond imagining,
The hope whereto so passionately cling
The dreaming generations from of old !
Not thus, to luckless men, are tidings told
Of mistress lost, or riches taken wing ;
And is eternity a slighter thing,
To have or lose, than kisses or than gold ?

Nay, tenderly, if needs thou must, disprove
My loftiest fancy, dash my grand desire
To see this curtain lift, these clouds retire,
And Truth, a boundless dayspring, blaze above
And round me ; and to ask of my dead sire
His pardon for a word that wronged his love.





WILLIAM WATSON
THE MODERN SADNESS

OLD Chaucer, the unconquerably young,
Methought thou camest by, and didst incline
An ear to these poor fitful notes of mine,
And didst reprove, albeit with gentle tongue,
A lyre to joyous mood so seldom strung—
So little vowed to laughter or the vine,
Or her that rose a goddess from the brine,
Mother of half the songs the world hath sung.

Blandly arraigning ghost ! 'tis all too true,—
A want of joy doth in these strings reside ;
Some shade, that troubled not thy clearer day,
Some loss, nor thou nor thy Boccaccio knew.
For thou art of the morning and the May—
I of the autumn and the eventide.





WILLIAM WATSON

NIGHTMARE

(WRITTEN DURING APPARENT
IMMINENCE OF WAR)

IN a false dream I saw the Foe prevail.
The war was ended ; the last smoke had rolled
Away : and we, erewhile the strong and bold,
Stood broken, humbled, withered, weak and pale,
And moaned, ‘ Our greatness is become a tale
To tell our children’s babes when we are old.
They shall put by their playthings to be told
How England once, before the years of bale,
Throned above trembling, puissant, grandiose, calm,
Held Asia’s richest jewel in her palm ;
And with unnumbered isles barbaric, she
The broad hem of her glistening robe impearled ;
Then, when she wound her arms about the world,
And had for vassal the obsequious sea.’





COULSON KERNAHAN

A SOLDIER'S PASSING

If in Life's Camp I saw my tent-door darken,
And one I knew not standing at salute :—
'Who are you?'—'Orderly Death, Sir. Hearken!
I bring a message no man may dispute.'—
'Good Corporal Death,' (thus would I haste to greet him),
'Stay but your message till the bugle call
The *Advance*, that like a soldier I may meet Him,
From whom you come, the King who captains all.'

Not from a bed, but from the field of battle,
Not mine a cow-death underneath a fence,
Nor with sad watchers listening for the rattle,
The last long lingering breath, ere all is mute ;
Not among friends, but foes, may I pass hence,
And, sword in hand, my Captain and King salute.





HENRY CHARLES BEECHING,
DEAN OF NORWICH
NIDDERDALE

Two things I love in this most lovely dale :
A stream of amber water, clear and chill,
O'er slope stones slipping, or at wayward will
Breaking smooth silence to a silver tale ;
A firwood then, fanned by a gentle gale
To lose its scent ; within the trunks are still,
And pillar a dark shrine for dreams to fill ;
Between the stones the unsunned grass is pale.

Two things I loved ; but thou, O lovelier
Than these, hast all that these were worth to me ;
Thy clearer eyes know more of change and stir
Than all the brooks, thy tongue more melody ;
And 'neath thy shadowy hair, thy serene face
Makes sanctuary in the holy place.





HENRY CHARLES BEECHING,
DEAN OF NORWICH
DOUBT

O THAT we too, above this earthly jar
One clear command obeying, we too might
Our path preordinate direct aright,
Moving in music where the planets are ;
Or motionless like to a fixèd star
Might wait and watch above this weary night
The far-off coming of the morning light,
His feet upon the eastern hills afar.

Alas, alas ! bewildered, desolate,
A horror of thick darkness wraps us round,
And some sit sadly down and weep and wait,
And some fall headlong in the gulf profound,
And some creep on by their own torches' blaze :—
O sun, shine forth, as in the ancient days.





ALICE MEYNELL

RENOUNCEMENT

I MUST not think of thee ; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight—
The thought of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song.

Oh, just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet
bright ;

But it must never, never come in sight ;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,

Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.





ALICE MEYNELL

YOUR OWN FAIR YOUTH

Your own fair youth, you care so little for it,
Smiling towards Heaven you would not stay the
advances
Of time and change upon your happiest fancies.
I keep your golden hour, and will restore it.
If ever, in time to come, you would explore it—
Your old self, whose thoughts went like last year's
pansies,
Look unto me ; no mirror keeps its glances ;
In my unfailing praises now I store it.
To guard all joys of yours from Time's estranging,
I shall be then a treasury where your gay,
Happy, and pensive past unaltered is.
I shall be then a garden charmed from changing,
In which your June has never passed away.
Walk there awhile among my memories.





ELLEN THORNEYCROFT FOWLER
WULFRUNA'S HAMPTON
(WOLVERHAMPTON)

Now certain women carved their names in stone
That whosoever ran the same might read.
Cambridge was founded by Saint Etheldrede,
The holy daughter of an Anglian throne :
Saint Frideswide it was made Oxford known
By many a generous gift and godly deed :
Saint Hilda nobly helped Northumbria's need
When Whitby's abbey to full height had grown.
Wulfruna, likewise, chose the better part ;
And in the midst of this our Mercian plain
A stately minster to God's glory raised,
To prove thereafter to the thronging mart
That favour is deceitful, beauty vain,
But she that fears her Maker shall be praised





MAURICE HEWLETT

THE WINDS' POSSESSION

WHEN winds blow high and leaves begin to fall,
And the wan sunlight flits before the blast ;
When fields are brown and crops are garnered all,
And rooks, like mastered ships, drift wide and fast
Maid Artemis, that feeleth her young blood
Leap like a freshet river for the sea,
Speedeth abroad with hair blown in a flood
To snuff the salt west wind and wanton free.

Then would you know how brave she is, how high
Her ancestry, how kindred to the wind,
Mark but her flashing feet, her ravisht eye
That takes the boist'rous weather and feels it kind
And hear her eager voice, how tuned it is
To Autumn's clarion shrill for Artemis.





ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON
REGRET

I HOLD it now more shameful to forget
Than fearful to remember; if I may
Make choice of pain, my Father, I will pray
That I may suffer rather than regret;

And this dull aching at my heart to-day
Is harder far to bear than when I set
My passionate heart some golden thing to get,
And, as I clasped it, it was torn away.

‘The world is fair,’ the elder spirit saith,
‘The tide flows fast, and on the further shore
Wait consolations and surprises rare.’

But youth still cries, ‘The love that was my faith
Is broken, and the ruined shrine is bare,
And I am all alone for evermore.’





ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON
ON THE HILL

I would not dwell with Passion ; Passion grows
By what he feeds on—sense and sound and sight—
The myriad bubbles dancing to the light,
The frenzied fragrance of the wanton rose.

But Love may dwell with me : pure Love, that glows
The richer through the cold and lonely night ;
And gilds with warm effulgence, brave and bright,
The frosty sparkle of unsullied snows.

When Passion throbs and quivers, Love is still
And piteous ; swift to picture, apt to bend
And listen ; at the shut of evening gray

He rises, threads the valley, climbs the hill,
To stand beside the milestone, stand and say :
So many leagues divide me from my friend.





HENRY NEWBOLT

DEVON

DEEP-WOODED combs, clear-mounded hills of morn,
Red sunset tides against a red sea-wall,
High lonely barrows where the curlews call,
Far moors that echo to the ringing horn,—
Devon! thou spirit of all these beauties born,
All these are thine, but thou art more than all:
Speech can but tell thy name, praise can but fall
Beneath the cold white sea-mist of thy scorn.

Yet, yet, O noble land, forbid us not
Even now to join our faint memorial chime
To the fierce chant wherewith their hearts were hot
Who took the tide in thy Imperial prime;
Whose glory's thine till Glory sleeps forgot
With her ancestral phantoms, Pride and Time.





A. ST. JOHN ADCOCK
OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

I PASSED without, what time the organ pealed
The last high rapture of a stately hymn,
And lingering where upon the twilight dim
The storied windows, rich with warmth, revealed
A pitying Christ 'mid humble shapes that kneeled,
Heard the punctilious Priest intone a grim
Creed-curse of some dead, earthly sanhedrim,
As if it opened all that God had sealed.

Not mine that perfect faith which strangely soothes
The world's disquiet where it enters in,
And yet I bear, through every night of doubt,
A heart of hope made glad by simple truths :
No door, O Priest ! shuts all God's light within,
His stars are with me in the dark without.





RICHARD LE GALLIENNE
GENTLE NIGHT

I DREAMED last night that she for whom my days
Are spent in hopeless weeping, came to me
And took my hand, and kissed full tenderly
My throbbing brow, and filled the still amaze
That hushed my tongue with words that stop my breath
E'en to remember—how that always she
Had been my love, and still must ever be,
Though she could only be my bride in death.

And so to-day the sorrow of my face
Shines softly like a joy, and every chime
That tells a passing hour makes it more sweet;
For now I know, though we shall never meet
In the cold light of an unfriendly Time,
Love has prepared us an eternal place.





LAURENCE BINYON

THE TUNNEL.

SITTING with strangers in the hurrying train,
We spoke not to each other. Golden May
Flooded the warm fields greener from the rain,
Then sudden darkness stole it all away.

Her face was gone ; but on the dark I framed
Its features, to my fancy's utmost height,
And with love's utmost fondness, never named,
Painted the image of my life's delight.

But lo ! a gleam the window's edge outlined,
And beautifully dawning through the gloom
She came back, O how much more than my mind
Had pictured, triumphing in breath and bloom !

Then I, ashamed, gave thanks with joy ; I knew
That my best dream was bettered with the true.





LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS

TO SLEEP

AH, Sleep, to me thou com'st not in the guise
Of one who brings good gifts to weary men,
Balm for bruised hearts and fancies alien
To unkind truth, and drying for sad eyes.
I dread the summons to that fierce assize
Of all my foes and woes, that waits me when
Thou mak'st my soul the unwilling denizen
Of thy dim troubled house where unrest lies.

My soul is sick with dreaming, let it rest.
False Sleep, thou hast conspired with Wakefulness,
I will not praise thee, I too long beguiled
With idle tales. Where is thy soothing breast?
Thy peace, thy poppies, thy forgetfulness?
Where is thy lap for me so tired a child?





LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS

BEAUTY AND THE HUNTER

WHERE lurks the shining quarry, swift and shy,
Immune, elusive, unsubstantial ?
In what dim forests of the soul, where call
No birds, and no beasts creep ? (the hunter's cry
Wounds the deep darkness, and the low winds sigh
Through avenues of trees whose faint leaves fall
Down to the velvet ground, and like a pall
The violet shadows cover all the sky).

With what gold nets, what silver-pointed spears
May we surprise her, what slim flutes inspire
With breath of what serene enchanted air ?—
Wash we our star-ward gazing eyes with tears,
Till on their pools (drawn by our white desire)
She bend and look, and leave her image there.





THE HON. MAURICE BARING
ΛΕΙΠΙΟΕΣΣΑ ΚΑΛΥΞ
(THE HEART OF THE LILY)

SHE listened to the music of the spheres ;
 We thought she did not hear our happy strings ;
 Stars diadem'd her hair in misty rings,
And all too late we knew those stars were tears.
Without she was a temple of pure snow,
 Within were piteous flames of sacrifice ;
 And underneath the dazzling mask of ice
A heart of swiftest fire was dying slow.

She in herself, as lonely lilies fold
Stiff silver petals over secret gold,
 Shielded her passion and remained afar
From pity. Cast red roses on the pyre !
She that was snow shall rise to Heaven as fire
 In the still glory of the morning star.





RUPERT BROOKE

THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me :

That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed ;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds ; dreams happy as her day ;
And laughter, learnt of friends ; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.





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